HdO

The World of the Khazars

New Perspectives
Selected Papers from the Jerusalem 1999 International Khazar Colloquium

Edited by
Peter B. Golden,
Haggai Ben-Shammai
& András Róna-Tas

Brill

The World of the Khazars

Handbook of Oriental Studies
Handbuch der Orientalistik

Section Eight
Central Asia

Edited by
Denis Sinor
Nicola Di Cosmo

VOLUME 17

The World of the Khazars

New Perspectives
Selected Papers from the Jerusalem 1999
International Khazar Colloquium
hosted by the Ben Zvi Institute

Edited by

Peter B. Golden, Haggai Ben-Shammai and
András Róna-Tas

BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2007

Brill has made all reasonable efforts to trace all right holders to any copyrighted material used in this work. In cases where these efforts have not been successful the publisher welcomes communications from copyright holders, so that the appropriate acknowledgements can be made in future editions, and to settle other permission matters.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISSN: 0169-8524
ISBN: 978 90 04 16042 2

Copyright 2007 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.
Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Hotei Publishing,
IDC Publishers, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and VSP.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to
The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910,
Danvers, MA 01923, USA.
Fees are subject to change.

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

CONTENTS

Abbreviations vii
Introduction 1
Opening Remarks 3
Haggai Ben-Shammai

Khazar Studies: Achievements and Perspectives 7
Peter B. Golden

The Alans: Neighbours of the Khazars in the Caucasus 59
Irina A. Arzhantseva

The Khazar Language 75
Marcel Erdal

New Findings Relating to Hebrew Epigraphic Sources from the Crimea, with an Appendix on the Readings in King Joseph's Letter 109
Artem Fedorchuk

The Conversion of the Khazars to Judaism 123
Peter B. Golden

Byzantine Sources for Khazar History 163
James Howard-Johnston

Al-Khazar wa-'l-Ṣaqâliba: Contacts and Conflicts? 195
Tatiana Kalinina

The Economy of the Khazar Khaganate 207
Thomas S. Noonan

Khazaria and Rus': An Examination of their Historical Relations 245
Vladimir Petrukhin

The Khazars and the Magyars 269
András Róna-Tas

The Khazar Motif in the Kuzari of Judah Halevi 279
Eliezer Schweid

Iranian Sources on the Khazars 291
Dan Shapira

Armenian and Georgian Sources on the Khazars:
A Re-Evaluation 307
Dan Shapira

The Story of a Euphemism: The Khazars in Russian Nationalist
Literature 353
Victor Shnirelman

The Khazars and the World of Islam 373
David Wasserstein

Yiddish Evidence for the Khazar Component in the Ashkenazic
Ethnogenesis 387
Paul Wexler

The Khazars and Byzantium—The First Encounter 399
Constantine Zuckerman

Select Bibliography 433

Index 447

ABBREVIATIONS

AEMAe	*Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* (Wiesbaden)
AO	*Archivum Ottomanicum* (Wiesbaden)
AOH	*Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (Budapest)
BGA	*Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* (Leiden)
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (Oxford)
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London)
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift* (München)
CFHB	*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Berlin)
CSHB	*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn)
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.)
HMK	See Gy. Németh, *A honfoglaló magyarság kialakulása*
MAIET	*Materialy po Arkheologii, Istorii i Étnografii Tavrii* (Simferopol', Crimea, Ukraine)
PSRL	*Polnoe sobranie russkix letopisej* (Moskva-St. Petersburg/ Petrograd/Leningrad)
PVL	*Povest' vremennyx let*, ed. D.S. Lixačëv and M.B. Sverdlov
REB	*Revue des Études Byzantines* (Paris)
TM	*Travaux et Mémoires* (Centre de Recherche d'histoire et civilisation byzantines, Paris)

INTRODUCTION

The Khazar Empire (ca. 650–ca. 965–969), one of the largest states of medieval Eurasia, extended from the Middle Volga lands in the north to the Northern Caucasus and Crimea in the south and from the Ukrainians steppe lands in the west to the western borders of present day Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the east. Its determinant component was Turkic in origin and it must be understood within the context of medieval Eurasian, Turkic, nomad-based states. It played a key role in the history of the peoples of Rus', medieval Hungary and the Caucasus and had an impact on the whole of Eastern-Northeastern Europe, the Balkans and the Islamic Middle East. Khazaria became one of the great trans-Eurasian trading terminals connecting the northern forest zones with Byzantium and the Islamic Caliphate. We find information on the Khazars written in Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Middle and Neo-Persian, Greek, Latin, Armenian, Georgian, medieval Slavic and Chinese. A number of undeciphered runiform-scripts were used on the territory of Khazaria, but a corpus of texts in what can be identified as the Khazar language has yet to be established. Courted by both Byzantium and the Islamic Caliphate, the Khazars, in the ninth century, converted to Judaism. After it was overrun by the Rus' and their Turko-nomadic allies, this once powerful Eurasian empire rapidly faded. The name "Gazaria" survived for some time as the designation of the Crimea, one of the regions long associated with them. The seemingly sudden disappearance of Khazaria with its connections across Eurasia and the Middle East has given it a romantic glow. The Judaization of its ruling core already in the Middle Ages produced a narrative that served as a framework to a philosophical work by Judah ha-Levi. In modern writings it has produced a range of political sentiments, running the gamut from anti-Semitic-tinged nationalism to attempts to derive Eastern European Jewry from the Khazars. As a consequence, in addition to the growing body of scholarly studies on the Khazars, there has been no shortage of speculative or politically motivated works and even several novels including Milorad Pavić's much-heralded fantasy, *The Dictionary of the Khazars*. Nonetheless, numerous fundamental questions regarding the Khazars, their language, history and culture, remain unanswered or in

dispute. The location of the Khazar capital Atïl/Etil has yet to be discovered, although some new, tantalizing finds in the Lower Volga region may resolve this question. The growing body of DNA research on Ashkenazi Jewry may determine the possibility of a Khazar component in the shaping of Eastern European Jews.

The papers in this volume stemming from a wide variety of disciplines shed new light on this important empire that was so central to the history of its era. They represent a wide range of viewpoints and give a good idea of the state of Khazar studies in the present day. In the intervening years since the Colloquium, many of the authors updated and expanded their papers, which were first presented in 1999. The papers were originally written and presented in an array of languages, a cultural note that would have been completely understandable to Khazaria's contemporaries. Khazar studies have always been international in character attracting scholars from countries as geographically far apart as the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Japan. Given the variety of transcription systems used in different languages to render the polyglot medieval and modern literature on the Khazars, no attempt has been made by the editors to bring them into a uniform system.

The Colloquium was primarily organized by Professor Haggai Ben-Shammai of the Hebrew University and the Ben-Zvi Institute which provided an ideal setting for this international conference. This volume of selected papers was edited by Professor Peter B. Golden (Rutgers University) in collaboration with Professor Haggai Ben-Shammai and Professor Emeritus András Róna-Tas (Szeged University). Special thanks are owed to Dr. Roman K. Kovalev (College of New Jersey), who undertook the task of editing the article of his late mentor Thomas Noonan.

November, 2006

Opening address by Haggai Ben Shammai at the
International Colloquium on the Khazars
The Israel Academy of Sciences and the Humanities
24 May 1999

פרופ' תדמור, סגן נשיא האקדמיה הישראלית למדעים ולמדעי הרוח;
פרופ' בן-ששון, רקטור האוניברסיטה העברית;
השופט בר-טוב, יו"ר הוועד המנהל של יד יצחק בן-צבי;
מר צבי מגן, שגריר ישראל אל הפדרציה הרוסית;
משתתפים יקרים ואורחים נכבדים.
אני חש כבוד ועונג רב, וגם התרגשות מסויימת לפתוח את הכינוס הבינלאומי על הכוזרים. איני בקי ביותר בתולדות כינוסים בינלאומיים על הכוזרים, אבל נראה לי שיש טעם באמירה שהתכנסות הערב היא ייחודית למדי בממדיה ובגיוון משתתפיה. נושא הכוזרים היה מוזנח למדי במשך שנים בארצנו, מסיבות שאולי ייזכרו במהלך דיונינו בכינוס. בשנים האחרונות משך הנושא תשומת לב, ממניעים שונים, שחשוב ביניהם היה סידרת טלויזיה שהכין מר אהוד יערי הנמצא אתנו הערב. מכון בן-צבי, העוסק מזה שנים בחקר קהילות ישראל במזרח, הגיע לכל דעה שהעניין הציבורי בכוזרים, בסיפור יחיד במינו זה של קיום יהודי, או שמא נאמר קהילה יהודית, במזרח, ראוי למענה מדעי-מחקרי שיקיף את כל ההבטים של הנושא ויהווה נקודת פתיחה לפעילות מחקרית מחודשת ורב-תחומית. למזלנו נתקבלה היזמה הזאת בהרבה רצון טוב, ואפילו התלהבות, מצד מוסדות ויחידים, וכך הגענו לערב נכבד זה.
ברשותכם, אעבור עתה לאנגלית.

Having said that much in Hebrew, and paid due respect to the tongue of the land, I will switch now to English, with due respect to the international forum here.

Prof. Tadmor, Vice President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and the Humanities;
Professor Ben-Sasson, Rector of the Hebrew University;
Judge Bar-Tov, Chairman of the Board of Yad Yizhak Ben-Zvi;
Mr. Zvi Magen, the ambassador of Israel to the Russian Federation;
Dear participants in the Conference;
Very distiguished guests.

I feel deeply pleased and honored, and somewhat excited, to open this International Colloquium on the Khazars. When we first spoke about this conference, and that was perhaps a year and a half ago, it sounded almost like a dream, and now the dream has come true. I am not very

familiar with the history of international conferences on the Khazars, but it seems to me that the assessment that this gathering is quite unique and unprecedented in its magnitude and the diversity of its participants makes good sense. The subject of the Khazars has been neglected for many years in Israel, for various reasons, some of which may come up in the course of our deliberations here. The profound philosophical-religious dialogue between the legendary Khazar king and the Jewish Rabbi, or odd genealogical theories got much more attention than the historical circumstances or the material remains of the ancient people of the steppe who triggered all these stories and images. If I may share with you my personal experience, I would say that as an adolescent the story of the Khazars that had made a rather deep impression on me was a Hebrew version of a historical novel authored originally in German by a long forgotten Jewish-Austrian blind writer named Oskar Baum. The subject of the actual history of the Khazars has attracted renewed public interest in Israel in recent years, due to a number of factors, not least among them a television series made by Mr. Ehud Yaari, who is with us tonight. The Ben-Zvi Institute, dedicated to the study of the Jewish Communities in the East, thought that the public interest in this peculiar Jewish existence, or perhaps community, in the East deserved to be matched by a scholarly statement that would comprehend all the aspects relevant to the subject, by bringing together, perhaps for the first time, experts in different disciplines, from different cultural and academic traditions. We do hope that our initiative will be a starting point to renewed, inter-disciplinary research of the Khazars. Luckily, this initial thought had been met with much good will, even enthusiasm, from several institutions and individuals, which brings me to the pleasant duty of expressing our thanks to all those who deserve it.

In accordance with the ancient Hebrew maxim (פותחים בכבוד אכסניה), I will start in honoring our hosts, and extend our thanks to the Israel Academy of Sciences and the Humanities, who has generously undertaken to host this opening reception and session.

Thanks also to the Hebrew University, who also made a kind contribution towards convening this conference.

To the Centre for Academic Educational Relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic States, and its director, Dr. Nathan Patlas; the Centre has recently started its activities, and their contribution to our Colloquium was one of the first of them. We look forward to continuous and fruitful cooperation with the Centre.

To Judge David Bar-Tov, the chairman of the Board of Yad Yizhak Ben-Zvi, who is going to address us tonight, and Dr. Zvi Zameret, the Director of that Foundation, both of whom gave us continuous support and encouragement during the long period of complex preparations for this conference.

To the members of the Steering Committee, who have lent us their erudition, rich experience and wisdom in devising the program of the conference. They are (in alphabetical order):

Dr. Reuven Amitai (Chairman of the Dept. of Islamic Studies, the Hebrew University),

Professor Menahem Ben-Sasson (Rector of the Hebrew University),

Mr. Zeev Elkin (of the Department of Jewish History at the Hebrew University), whose dedicated involvement in the preparations for this conference was an invaluable contribution to its success,

Professor Peter B. Golden (of Rutgers University in New Jersey, U.S.A.),

Dr. Shelomo Kol-Yaakov (of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University),

Professor Vladimir Petrukhin (of Moscow University),

Professor Shaul Shaked (of the Hebrew University and chairman of the Academic Committee of the Ben-Zvi Institute),

Professor Haim Tadmor (Vice President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and the Humanities), who is also going to address us tonight,

and Professor Michael Zand (of the Department of Indian, Iranian and Armenian Studies at the Hebrew University).

Our gratitude is due to the staff of the institutions involved in organizing the Conference. We professors are strong in words, but somebody has to do the work. We thank the staff of the Israel Academy, especially Dr. Lea Tzivoni, the Academic Secretary. We are deeply indebted to the staff of the Ben-Zvi Institute, Mr. Michael Glatzer, the academic Secretary, and Mrs. Sarit Noy, our Administrative Aide, who have both invested many months of incessant efforts towards the success of this gathering, as well as my deputy, Mr. Nahem Ilan, and our secretary, Ms. Irit El-Al.

Finally, I wish to extend a warm and heartily welcome to our dear colleagues, the participants in the Conference who have come almost from the four corners of the earth, to share this scholarly experience.

This gathering is officially termed COLLOQUIUM, that is a conversation. It is going to be a multi-lingual conversation, and simultaneous

translation will facilitate the participants' ability to follow each other's presentations (not tonight!). In the spirit of the literal meaning of the term colloquium, and notwithstanding the linguistic diversity, I hope and wish you all that our gathering will result in bringing about fruitful scholarly conversation and free flow or exchange of information and views, and maybe some new solutions to age old riddles of the Khazars' story.

KHAZAR STUDIES: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Peter B. Golden

In the *Fârsnâma* of Ibn al-Balḫî, a twelfth-century Seljuk-era historian and geographer whose work was commissioned by one of the Iranian Seljukids, the story is related that the Sâsânid Shâh, Ḫusraw I Anûšîrvân (531–579) placed at the right of his throne, "a seat of gold and (two) other seats of gold on the left and behind (his throne). Of these three seats, one was reserved for the King of China, the other for the King of Byzantium and the third for the King of the Khazars, so that should they come, they would sit on these seats. They were kept all year long and no one else could sit on them."[1] Although it might be argued that this late source has garbled the tale and that the throne was reserved for the Western Türk Qağan (Anûširvân was married to a daughter of the Türk Qağan,[2] yet other manuscripts have the Hephthalite monarch), this is not crucial. As we shall see there was, most probably, a relationship between the Khazar ruling house and that of the Western Türks. Even more importantly, the Khazar Qağan, anachronistically or not, was considered worthy enough to take his rightful seat alongside the other major superpower emperors of Eurasia.

One of the great colossi of medieval Eurasia, a state whose borders encompassed the Dnepr zone in the West, the Middle Volga in the North, the trans-Volgan steppe approaches to Khwârazm in the East and the Crimea and North Caucasian steppelands in the South, the Khazar Qağanate was one of the more long-lived steppe empires, lasting some 300 years (ca. 650–ca. 965–969).[3] It contained an ethnically variegated

[1] Ibn al-Balkhî, *Fârsnâma*, ed. G. LeStrange, R.A. Nicholson (London, 1921), p. 97; A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (2nd ed. Copenhagen, 1944, reprint: Osnabrück, 1971), pp. 411–412. On al-Balḫî, see I. Ju. Kračkovskij, *Arabskaja geografičeskaja literatura* in his *Izbrannye sočinenija* (Moskva-Leningrad, 1955–1960), IV, pp. 322–323.

[2] Al-Masʿûdî, *Murûj aḏ-Ḏahab wa Maʿâdin al-Jawhar*, ed. Ch. Pellat (Beirut, 1966–1979), I, p. 307.

[3] The case for 969 as marking the completion of the Rus' conquest of the lower Volga, the core Khazar territory has been made by I.G. Konovalova, "Padenie Xazarii v istoričeskoj pamjati raznyx narodov" *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Vostočnoj Evropy 2001* (Moskva, 2003), pp. 171–190.

population of Turkic, Iranian, Finno-Ugrian, Slavic, Palaeocaucasian peoples and Jewish communities of some antiquity in the Crimea and Caucasus. In the economic realm, Khazaria included populations that were pastoral nomadic, semi-nomadic, agriculturalist, viniculturalist as well as those engaged in fishing, hunting and gathering. There were also significant urban populations, both of indigenous and immigrant origins consisting of merchants and craftsmen. The judicial system provided for the legal practices of Jews, Muslims, Christians and pagans in ways that presage the later *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire. Khazaria had and largely retains an enviable reputation for religious toleration. In this regard, it was typical of many of the early Turkic nomadic polities. The Qağanate also possessed a formidable military machine, the foundation upon which the whole of this imperial edifice rested. The ruler maintained a salaried personal army/comitatus numbering some 7000–10,000 mounted warriors. On those occasions when the Qağan sallied forth, all prostrated themselves before his awesome majesty.

The Khazar Qağanate was, indeed, one of the great powers of the age. It played an important role in Rus' history[4] (the extent of which is still hotly debated),[5] in early Hungarian history and in the history of the Caucasus. It halted the penetration of the Volga and Black Sea steppes lands by the expanding Umayyad Caliphate. It was a leading player in international trade, both east-west and north-south, becoming one of the major trading partners of and conduits to the ʿAbbâsid Caliphate, contributing in this way to the remarkable efflorescence of ninth century Baghdad. It may be classified as one of the "trade-tribute empires" of the period 551–907, extracting tribute from and trading with its subject populations and sedentary neighbors. Such states also included their progenitors, the Türks, as well as their contemporaries, the Uyğur, Tibetans and

[4] On institutional influences, see, for example, O. Pritsak, "The System of Government Under Volodimer the Great and His Foreign Policy" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, XIX (1990), pp. 573–593 and P.B. Golden, "Nomads in the Sedentary World: The Case of the Pre-Činggisid Rus' and Georgia" in A.M. Khazanov, A. Wink (eds.), *Nomads in the Sedentary World* (Richmond, 2001), pp. 24–75 and his "Ascent by Scales: The System of Succession in Kievan Rus' in a Eurasian Context" in J. Duzinkiewiecz (ed.), *States, Societies, Cultures. East and West. Essays in Honor of Jaroslaw Pelenski* (New York, 2004), pp. 229–258.

[5] See V. Shnirelman, *The Myth of the Khazars and Intellectual Antisemitism in Russia, 1970s–1990s* (Jerusalem, 2002); M. Kizilov and D. Mikhaylova, "The Khazar Kaganate and the Khazars in European Nationalist Ideologies and Scholarship" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 14 (2005), pp. 31–53 and É.D. Vaščenko, *"Xazarskaja problema" v otečestvennoj istoriografii XVIII–XX vv.* (St. Petersburg, 2006).

Qitan states[6] (with exception of the Tibetans, all these other states also derived from the Türk Empire). The economic history of Eastern Europe and the lands of the Caliphate cannot be properly understood without reference to the Khazars. Ġulâms of Khazar origin, or those who entered the Caliphate through Khazaria, became some of the leading figures of ʿAbbâsid politics.[7] Among them was "Buġa the Elder" (*Buġâ al-Kabîr*), one of the most powerful of these *ġulâm* commanders. He was active in the Caucasus in the mid-ninth century and at one point was suspected of "taking council with his kinsmen, the Khazars."[8] The conversion of significant elements of the Khazars to Judaism and the role of Khazarian Jewry (undoubtedly a community of multiple origins) in the shaping of modern Eastern European Jewish communities remain highly polemical issues. The latter question, in particular, has given rise to a number of "popular" and controversial studies, such as those by Arthur Koestler or Boris Altschüler with their sweeping claims of Khazar legacy and influence.[9] Most recently, they have been brought into the discussion of the origins of the Qazaq people,[10] as the new Qazaq Republic attempts to explore the parameters of its past.

Despite the importance of the Khazars to their contemporaries in Eurasia and the Near East clearly reflected in the medieval sources, they are barely noted in the growing field of World History studies.[11] They

---

[6] N. Di Cosmo, "State Formation and Periodization in Inner Asian History" *Journal of World History*, 10/1 (Spring, 1999), pp. 30–32.

[7] P.B. Golden, "Khazar Turkic Ġulâms in Caliphal Service" *Journal Asiatique* 292/1–2 (2004), pp. 279–309.

[8] See al-Ṭabarî, *Taʾrîḫ al-Ṭabarî*, ed. M.A. Ibrâhîm (Cairo, 1962–1967), IX, pp. 192–193 (active in the Caucasus, *s.a*. 238/852–3). But, the Ottoman historian Müneccimbaşı (d. 1702), basing himself on the local chronicle, the *Taʾrîḫ al-Bâb* (see V.F. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvân and Darband* (Cambridge, 1958), p. 25), describes him as campaigning against the Khazars and Alans. A fuller account is found in the Georgian *K'art'lis C'xovreba* ed. S. Qauxč'išvili (T'bilisi, 1955), I, pp. 256–257, which connects him with the Khazars, "his kinsmen" (*tomt'a mist'a*).

[9] A. Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe. The Khazar Empire and its Heritage* (London, 1976); B. Al'tšuler (Altschüler), *Poslednjaja tajna Rossii*, trans. S. Markin, S. Bulanin (Moskva, 1996) a revised and expanded version of the work originally published in German as *Geheimbericht aus der Grossen Steppe. Die Wahrheit über das Reich der Russen* (Saarbrücken, 1994). See also K.A. Brook, *The Jews of Khazaria* (Northvale, NJ, 1999).

[10] See B.B. Irmuxanov, *Kazaxstan: istoriko-publicističeskij vzgljad* (Almaty, 1996), pp. 35–73 and his *Xazary i Kazaxi* (Almaty, 2003), reviewed by P.B. Golden, "The Khazars and the Kazakhs: New Perspectives" in *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 14 (2005), pp. 281–298.

[11] William McNeill, one of the pioneers of "World History" virtually ignores them in his *World History* (New York-London-Toronto, 1967) and has only scattered references to them in his classic *The Rise of the West. A History of the Human Community*

do not fare appreciably better in some works devoted to Central Asia or the steppe.[12] The recent UNESCO-sponsored *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* while finding much to say about India (South Asia) an important cultural influence in Central Asia (often through other intermediaries), but nonetheless peripheral to the region, largely ignores the Western Eurasian extension of the Central Asian steppes and notes the Khazars only in passing.[13] Some fifty years earlier, Grousset in his admirable *L'Empire des Steppes* devoted slightly more than three pages to them.[14] Happily, the Khazars are given more extensive and fully justified treatment in some other recent general studies such as the *Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*.[15] More often than not, however, they have been the "stepchildren" of other studies, especially those dealing with the origins of the Rus' and Hungarian states; briefly considered, but not the primary focus of attention.

Perhaps one of the problems is that there are few statements that can be made about the Khazars without resorting to qualifications. They were and remain problematic. Fifty years ago, in his review of Ananiasz Zajączkowski's *Ze studiów nad zagadnieniem chazarskim*, Omeljan Pritsak remarked that "wie bekannt, gehört das Chas.-Problem zu den schwierigsten, vor allem aus den Gründe, weil die in vielen Sprachen verfassten Quellen sehr dürftig, heterogen und vielfach kaum authentisch sind."[16] Although I think he would want to qualify "kaum authentisch"

(Chicago, 1963), pp. 420, 443, 447, 448, 477, 479, 650, 782. He does, however, correctly contextualize them in relation to Byzantium and the Caliphate and views their adoption of Judaism as a means to "resist assimilation into the body politic of any of their greater neighbors" (p. 479).

[12] Cf. G. Hambly (ed.), *Central Asia* (New York, 1966); L. Kwanten, *Imperial Nomads. A History of Central Asia 500–1500* (Philadelphia, 1979) and S.A.M. Adshead, *Central Asia in World History* (New York, 1993) which do not mention them. J.-P. Roux in his earlier *Histoire des Turcs* (Paris, 1984), pp. 78–82, discusses them briefly, but notes them only in passing in his *L' Asie centrale* (Paris, 1991), pp. 39, 219, 239, 252, 270.

[13] See B. Litvinsky et al. (eds.), *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. III, *The Crossroads of Civilizations A.D. 250 to 750* (Paris, 1996), pp. 430, 473 and M.S. Asimov, C.E. Bosworth (eds.), *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. IV/1, *The Age of Achievement: A.D. 750 to the end of the fifteenth century* (Paris, 1998), pp. 63, 68, 85, 145, 368.

[14] R. Grousset, *L'empire des steppes* (Paris, 1939, reprint: 1960), pp. 235–238.

[15] P.B. Golden, "The Peoples of the south Russian steppes" in D. Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 263–270 and most recently D. Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, I (Oxford, 1998), esp. pp. 282–298.

[16] See his review of A. Zajączkowski, *Ze studiów nad zagadnieniem Chazarskim* (Kraków, 1947) in *Der Islam*, 29 (194), p. 96.

now, little has otherwise changed. Denis Sinor, in his 1963 bibliographical introduction to Central Eurasian history, still declared that "les études Khazares sont d'une compléxité peu ordinaire."[17] Fundamental questions remain unresolved. As Irène Sorlin observed in her overview of Soviet scholarship on the subject up to the 1960s, the origins and disappearance of this once mighty empire remain shrouded.[18] The Russian historian Lev Nikolaevič Gumilëv, with his gift for pithy phrases, termed Khazaria "a steppe Atlantis" (*stepnaja Atlantida*)[19] and it has, like the latter, became the subject of fact and fancy, critical study and romantic speculation. There are, at present, a number of web sites on the Internet devoted to them indicating the growing interest in Khazarica outside of scholarly circles.

It is not my intention to present a full, detailed account of the course of Khazar studies over the past three centuries.[20] There is neither the time—nor the need—to do so. Francis Dvornik in his path-breaking study of Constantine and Methodius surveyed the literature up to 1933. Gyula Moravcsik, in his indispensable *Byzantinoturcica*, noted the most important works from 1822 to 1957. Avrahm Yarmolinsky published two extensive bibliographies in 1938 and 1959. This was followed by a select, annotated bibliography by Bernard Weinryb in 1963.[21] Already at that time there were over 550 entries. The more important and useful

---

[17] D. Sinor, *Introduction a l'étude de l'Eurasie centrale* (Wiesbaden, 1963), p. 270.

[18] I. Sorlin, "Le problème des Khazares et les historiens soviétiques dans les vingt dernières années" *Travaux et mémoires du Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation byzantines*, 3 (1968), p. 423: "la destinée de l'État khazare pose un véritable énigme qui a depuis longtemps retenu l'attention des historiens…ses origines comme sa disparition demeurent obscures."

[19] L.N. Gumilëv, *Stepnaja Atlantida* in the volume entitled *Otkrytie Xazarii* in his *Sočinenija*, VI (Moskva, 1994) which includes his *Otkrytie Xazarii* (Moskva, 1966) and various articles gathered together under the heading of "Stepnaja Atlantida," including the article of that name that he co-authored with A. Alekseev which appeared in *Azija i Afrika Segodnja* (1962), No. 2. In his extensive musings on Rus' and the peoples of the steppe, *Drevnjaja Rus' i velikaja step'* (Moskva, 1989 which has undergone a number of reprintings, with differing pagination), chaps. VI–IX, he calls Khazaria a "chimera."

[20] See Vaščenko, *"Xazarskaja problema"* for the literature produced in Russia alone since the eighteenth century.

[21] J. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* (2nd ed., Berlin, 1958), I, pp. 81–86; F. Dvornik, *Les légends de Constantin et de Methode* (Prague, 1933); A. Yarmolinsky, "The Khazars, A Bibliography" *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, XLII (1938), pp. 695–710 and his "The Khazars [an annotated] Bibliography 1940–1958" *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, LXIII (1959), pp. 237–241; B. Weinryb, "The Khazars. Annotated Bibliography" *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, Library of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, VI (Spring, 1963), pp. 111–129.

of these works are noted in the major studies on the Khazars that have appeared since the 1930s. My task, rather, is to present some idea as to what Khazarology has accomplished thus far and to perhaps suggest some future directions. Even a quick glance at modern Khazar studies will show that scholars are far from universal accord on many fundamental issues—although there are, I think, also some broad grounds of agreement. Any presentation, of the achievements of Khazar studies, I might add, is necessarily idiosyncratic, inevitably reflecting personal interests, languages, political and cultural education etc. I make no claims that my comments will be otherwise.

The Hungarian School

I will begin my survey with some remarks about what we may call the *Hungarian School.* This may strike some as an odd point of departure, but the Hungarians scholars, with their long-standing and understandable interest in the Altaic and Uralic languages of Eurasia, are a logical starting point. A necessary preface to modern work in Khazar studies was the path-breaking study of the Bulğar Turkic loanwords in Hungarian by Zoltán Gombocz (1877–1935) which appeared in 1912[22] and a number of lesser studies such as József Thúry's identification of Ibn Rusta's ايشا (*îšâ*) with the Turkic title *šad*.[23] Of fundamental importance is a work by the great Hungarian Turkologist, Gyula Németh (1890–1976), devoted to the origins of the Hungarians, his *A honfoglaló magyarság kialakulása* ("The Formation of the Hungarian People in the Conquest Era"), a work which first appeared in 1930. A long awaited revised and expanded version appeared in 1991 more than a decade after his death.[24] The second edition has become as much a bibliographical rarity as the first. Németh sought to trace and fix within the larger context of ethnogenetic processes in Eurasia the origins of the Hungarians, an Ugric tribal confederation drawn to the borders of the steppe world and profoundly

[22] Z. Gombocz, "Die bulgarisch-türkischen Lehnwörter in der ungarischen Sprache" *Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne*, XXX (Helsinki, 1912). This was based on his *Honfoglaláselőtti török jövevényszavaink* in the *Nyelvtudományi Társaság Kiadványai*, 7 (Budapest, 1908).

[23] J. Thúry, "A Khazar *iša* méltóságnévről" *Keleti Szemle*, 4 (1903), pp. 1–4.

[24] Gy. Németh, *A honfoglaló magyarság kialakulása* (HMK, Budapest, 1930, 2nd rev. ed., Budapest, 1991).

influenced there by Turkic peoples (indeed most of the Hungarian tribal names can be etymologized on the basis of Turkic),[25] eventually becoming part of the steppe world. This was reflected in the names by which the early Medieval Hungarians, or Proto-Hungarians, were known to the outside world (Sabirs, Türks—the Byzantines called them Τούρκοι) and in their institutions (e.g. the dual kingship of the Gyula and Kende, both steppe titles) and their alliance with Khazaria. Joined while still in the Pontic steppes by the Khazar rebels known as the Qabars, who came with them to their new home in Pannonia, we know from Constantine Porphyrogenitus's famous account that the Qabars taught them the Khazar tongue, which they still spoke in Constantine's day (mid-tenth century). The Qabars in turn learned Hungarian and enjoyed a high status among them.[26] Presumably, Khazar Qabar is the source for some of the pre-Ottoman and pre-Cuman Turkic loanwords in Hungarian.[27]

We begin with Németh because his work, important both methodologically and substantively, and that of some other Hungarian scholars, is directly related to any discussion of the name *Khazar* and its etymology. This is our first question: *who were the Khazars*? Németh, building on an already long-standing tradition of scholarship in these areas, rightly deduced that the question of Hungarian ethnogenesis would never be satisfactorily explained without reference to the formation of the peoples of the Western Eurasian steppes. In particular, he focused on ethnonymic patterns and on the basis of Turkic philology presented a reconstruction of the migrations of the early or Proto-Hungarians. In the process he had to touch on the Khazars, who loom very large in the steppe phase of Hungarian history, as well as the European Huns, the various Oğuro-Bulğaric peoples, the Sabirs and Türks. He was particularly interested in the Khazar language and having reviewed the conflicting testimony of the sources and some of the Khazar linguistic remnants, concluded that the reference to a language spoken in Khazaria that did

[25] Árpád Berta in his "On the Turkic Origin of the names of the Hungarian tribes" *Turkic Languages*, 2/1 (1998), pp. 32–48, has now proposed Turkic etymologies even for *Magyar* itself and *Nyék* which were, hitherto, considered to be of Finno-Ugric or mixed Finno-Ugric and Turkic origin.

[26] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Adminstrando Imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, trans. R.J.H. Jenkins, Dumbarton Oaks Texts, I (Washington, D.C., 1967), pp. 174/175.

[27] On some of the complexities of separating the various Turkic strata in Hungarian, see T. Halasi-Kun, "Kipchak Philology and the Turkic Loanwords in Hungarian, I" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, I, (1975), pp. 156–210.

not resemble any other language (al-Iṣṭaḫrî, Ibn Ḥawqal)[28] could hardly be anything else but Hungarian. Beyond the Hungarian presence in this polyglot state, there were, he suggested, speakers of Bulğar Turkic, Türk and Sabir (which he viewed as Common Turkic) and various other tongues (e.g. Slavic). While not taking a stand in the first edition on Khazar's affiliations within Turkic, in the second edition there is the parenthetical remark: "in a simplified way, the Khazar language has been identified with Bulğaric" (A kazár nyelvet leegyszerűsítve, azonosították már a bolgárral).[29] This seems to be the view of many Hungarian Turkologists as reflected in the works of L. Ligeti.[30] Noting the sparcity of Khazar linguistic data, András Róna-Tas, however, while inclining towards its possible affiliation with Čuvaš (i.e. Oğuric/Bulğaric) Turkic, urges caution.[31]

The Oğuric peoples (e.g. the Šarağurs, Oğurs [Οὖρωγοι, recte Οὔγωροι = *Uğor* perhaps a garbling of * ὠγουροι = *Oğur*], = *Oğur*], Onoğurs, Bulğars et al.), who are attested in the Western Eurasian steppes from at least 463 A.D. when they dispatched ambassadors to Constantinople (as we know from Priscus),[32] were part of a larger confederation of tribes that arched across Eurasia, called *Tiele* [T'ieh-lê, Chinese forms are given in Pinyin transcription with, when necessary, the older Wade-Giles system in brackets] in the Chinese sources. The Tiele included elements that were comprised the Uyğur confederation.[33] This Uyğur connection has some potential relevance to our theme (see below).

---

[28] See al-Iṣṭaḫrî, *Kitâb Masâlik al-Mamâlik*, ed. M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 2nd ed., 1927), pp. 222, 225 who reports that the Khazar language was not Turkic or Persian, nor did it resemble any other language and then contradicts that by remarking that Khazar was like Bulğaric. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitâb Ṣûrat al-Arḍ* (Beirut, 1992), pp. 332, 335 has the same notice. Al-Bîrûnî, *Al-Aṯâr al-baqiyya ʿan qurûn al-ḫâliyya*, ed. C.E. Sachau (Leipzig, 1878, reprint: 1923, Baghdad, n.d.), pp. 41–42, says that the Suwar, who were part of the Volga Bulğar union, spoke a language that was a mixture of Khazar and Turkic.

[29] Németh, *HMK*[1], pp. 209–215; *HMK*[2], pp. 166–170.

[30] L. Ligeti, *A magyar nyelv török kapcsolatai a honfoglalás előtt és az Árpád-korban* (Budapest, 1986), esp. pp. 475–487.

[31] A. Róna-Tas, *A honfoglaló magyar nép* (Budapest, 1996), pp. 100–101, Eng. Trans. by N. Bodoczky, *Hungarians and Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Budapest, 1999), p. 114.

[32] The fragments of Priscus in: R.C. Blockley (ed., trans.), *The Fragmentary Classicizing Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus* (Liverpool, 1981, 1983), II, pp. 344, 345.

[33] This may be a slightly later version of the name *Ting-ling* both of which may be a rendering of an Altaic word **tegreg* "wheel, wagon, cart" = "the people of the carts." Chinese sources later referred to the Uyğur confederation as the Gaoche "High Cart" [People], in this case, perhaps, a translation of the term transcribed as Tiele.

The ethnonym *Oğur* is itself clearly the Oğuric/Bulğaric form of *Oğuz*, a term that originally denoted "tribe" or "lineage" and was translated as such by the Chinese (cf. *Toquz Oğuz* = Gaoxing [Kao-hsing]). The full history of the Tiele has yet to be written and is one of the many desiderata of Eurasian and early Khazar studies. A useful introduction to this and other questions may be found in Károly Czeglédy's, "The Age of Nomadic Migrations," a study of migrations in the steppe from the Xiongnu to the arrival of the Türks in the Pontic zone that appeared in Hungarian in 1969 and in a revised English translation in 1983.[34] The Oğuric Turks spoke a form of Turkic that already at that time diverged from Common Turkic and the number of distinctive phonological markers (e.g. rhotacizm, lambdaism) would grow over time. The debate continues over the place of Oğuric within Turkic and the chronology of these changes which are largely studied through the fragments of Danubian and Volga Bulğar, the Oğuric loanwords in Hungarian and the history of Čuvaš, the only surviving member of this language grouping.[35] The determination of whether the Khazar language belonged to the Oğuric or Common Turkic groupings would shed important light on Khazar origins. The most recent summation of this question is found in Marcel Erdal's contribution to this volume.

Németh, following Gombocz, derived the ethnonym *Xazar*/Козары etc. = **Qazar* from Turkic *qaz-* "to ramble, to roam" (cf. *Qazaq*), a presumed velar variant of the Common Turkic *kez-*). In an earlier study, I accepted Németh's findings which fit into the broad semantic category

[34] K. Czeglédy, *A nomád népek vándorlása napkelettől napnyugatig* (Budapest, 1969), rev. Eng. trans. "From East to West: The Age of Nomadic Migrations in Eurasia," trans. P.B. Golden, in *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, III (183), pp. 25–125. A survey of the problems and literature may be found in P.B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples* (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 92–104.

[35] For Bulğaric see A. Parzymies, *Język protobułgarski* (Warszawa, 1994); M. Erdal, *Die Sprache der wolgabolgarischen Inschriften* (Wiesbaden, 1993) and the works of T. Tekin, *Tuna Bulgarları ve Dilleri* (Ankara, 1987) and his *Volga Bulgar Kitabeleri ve Volga Bulgarcası* (Ankara, 1998). For the larger linguistic issues, see A. Róna-Tas, *Bevezetés a csuvas nyelv ismeretébe* (Budapest, 1978), esp. pp. 11–90; B. Scherner, *Arabische und neupersische Lehnwörter im Tschuwaschischen. Versuch einer Chronologie ihrer Lautveränderungen* (Wiesbaden, 1977); A. Róna-Tas, *An Introduction to Turkology* (Studia Uralo-Altaica 33, Szeged, 1991), pp. 25 ff. and the literature cited there as well as his "The Reconstruction of Proto-Turkic and the Genetic Question" in L. Johanson, E. Csató (eds.), *The Turkic Languages* (London, 1998), pp. 67–80 and L. Johanson, "The History of Turkic" in the same volume, pp. 81–125 and most recently, R.A. Miller, "Turkic *š*, *z*: Chuvash *l*, *r* revisited" *Turkic languages*, 3/1 (1999), pp. 3–42.

of names denoting nomadic life style.[36] With the publication of the fragmentary Tes and Terkhin (Tariat) inscriptions from the Uyğur Empire (744–840) and the appearance there of the name *Qasar* (it is unclear if this is a personal or tribal name), however, other hypotheses were brought forward.[37] Bazin, noting its phonetic identity with the Uyğur tribal name *Qasar*, derived it from Turkic *qas-* "to tyrannize, oppress, terrorize."[38] András Róna-Tas connected it with the Middle Persian rendering of the Roman title *Caesar*: *Kesar* (cf. the Tibetan *dru-gu Gesar* "the Turk Gesar") > *Qasar*. In Oğuric *Qasar* could become *Qazar* > *Xazar*.[39] Thus, the ethnonym **Qazar* would be connected with *Qasar* and the Khazars themselves could, presumably, be seen as stemming from the Tiele/Uyğur grouping. This was not a new idea. An attempt to connect the *Kesa* and *Hesa* [*K'o-sa, Ho-sa*] "Khazars" of Chinese sources with the similarly named Gesa [*Ko-sa*], was made by D.M. Dunlop (on whom see below) who, for good measure, also viewed the Οὔρωγοι of Priscus (see above) as a corruption of the ethnonym *Uyğur*.[40]

There are problems with these constructions as well. The Japanese scholar resident in Hungary, Toru Senga, has concluded that the Uyğur Gesa/Qasar is not a tribal name but the surname of the chief of the Sikari tribe of the Toquz Oğuz and any attempt to search for Khazar origins in

---

[36] Gombocz, "Die bulgarisch-Türkischen Lehnwörter" *MSFOu*, XXX (Helsinki, 1912), p. 199. Németh, *HMK*[1], p. 37, *HMK*[2], p. 94. See the lengthy discussion in P.B. Golden, *Khazar Studies* (Budapest, 1980), I, pp. 123–133.

[37] On the inscriptions see S.G. Kljaštornyj, "Terxinskaja nadpis" *Sovetskaja Tjurkologija* (1980), No. 3, pp. 82–95, Eng. version "The Terkhin Inscription" *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, XXXVI (1982), pp. 335–366; K. Czeglédy, "A terkhini ujgur rovásírásos felirat török és magyar történeti és nyelvészi vonatkozásai" *Magyar Nyelv*, LXXVII (1981), pp. 461–462; T. Tekin, "Kuzey Moğolistan'daki Yeni bir Uygur Anıtı: Taryat (Terhin) Kitabesi" *Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten*, XLVI, No. 184 (1982), pp. 795–838; L. Bazin, "Notes de toponymie turque ancienne" *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, XXXVI (1982), pp. 57–60; T. Tekin, "The Tariat (Terkhin) Inscription" *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, XXXVII (1983), pp. 43–86; S.G. Kljaštornyj, "Tésinskaja stela" *Sovetskaja Tjurkologija* (1983), No. 6, p. 76–90 and his "The Tes Inscription of the Uighur Bögü Qagan" *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, XXXIX/1 (1985), pp. 137–156; T. Moriyasu, A. Ochir, *Provisional Report of Researches on Historical Sites and Inscriptions in Mongolia from 1996 to 1998*) (Osaka, 1999), pp. 159–161; 168–172. Á. Berta, *Szavaimat jól halljátok…A türk és ujgur rovásírásos emlékek* (Szeged, 2004), pp. 229–266, provides the most recent critical edition of the texts.

[38] L. Bazin, "Pour une nouvelle hypothése sur l'origine des Khazar" *Materialia Turcica* 7/8 (1981–82), pp. 51–71

[39] A. Róna-Tas, "A kazár népnévről" *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények*, 84 (1982), pp. 349–379. See also his " Újabb adatok a kazár népnév történetéhez" *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények*, 85 (1983), pp. 126–133.

[40] D.M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, 1954), pp. 34–40.

the Uyğur confederation "is not plausible."[41] The Medieval (and Modern) Chinese renderings of *Khazar*, invariably prefaced by Tujue (Türk) are problematic: *Kesa* was pronounced in Early Middle Chinese (EMC, up to ca. 601) and Late Middle Chinese (LMC, ca. 7th–8th century) something like *k^{h}a' sat* and *Hesa* (EMC) *yat sat*, (LMC) *xɦat sat.*[42] Final *-t* in EMC and LMC often transcribes *-r* in foreign words. Thus, the Chinese forms could render *Kasar/*Kazar, *Ġatsar, *Ġazar, *Ġasar etc. These transcriptions use a different first character than the one used to render the Uyğur *Qasar*, Gesa (EMC, LMC: *Kat sat*)[43] = *Kar sar = *Kasar. The rendering of a foreign medial *-z-* in Chinese is problematic. Thus, the modern ethnonym "Kazakh"/Qazaq is transcribed as *hasake* in Modern Mandarin. Medieval Uyghur *tüzün* "noble, well-behaved," is rendered in EMC as *tɔ sin^h*, LMC *tuə sin* ` = Modern Chin. *duxin*.[44] Thus, a case can be made that Kesa and Hesa transcribed *Qazar. Other difficulties may be seen in the presence of the anthroponym *Qasar* not only among the Uyğurs and later Mongols, but also among the North Caucasian Huns, vassals of the Khazars themselves, in the form **Qasar* (*Č'at' Kasar* **Ջաթ Կասար** noted by Movsês Dasxuranc'i).[45] Moreover, the word *qasar* is found in later Qıpčaq as the term for a type of dog (cynonyms are not uncommon among the Turks and Mongols) and may well derive from a root **qas* associated with "jaw, mandibles."[46] The question remains open and we shall return to it in our discussion of Khazar origins.

We might also note here that the Hungarians were, understandably, very much interested in the Eastern sources for Hungarian/Proto-Hungarian history. In 1900, the sources for the history of the Conquest-era Hungarians, including excerpts from and translations of the most important Arab and Persian authors were published.[47] Important works

---

[41] T. Senga, "The Toquz Oghuz Problem and the Origin of the Khazars" *Journal of Asian History*, 24/1 (1990), pp. 57–69.

[42] For the Chinese forms see E. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* (Vancouver, 1991), pp. 173, 271, 123, 271.

[43] Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, pp. 106, 271.

[44] Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), p. 576, J.R. Hamilton, *Les Ouîgours à l'époque des cing dynasties* (Paris, 1955), p. 158; Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, pp. 81, 344.

[45] Golden, *Khazar Studies*, I, pp. 173–174.

[46] See Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), p. 666: *qasığ*, see also P.B. Golden, "The Dogs of the Medieval Qıpčaqs" in *Varia Eurasiatica. Festschrift für Professor András Róna-Tas* (Szeged, 1991), pp. 52–53.

[47] Gy. Pauler, S. Szilágyi (eds.), *A magyar honfoglalás kútfői* (Budapest, 1900). A

dealing with the Arab and Persian sources on the Khazars were published by Mihály Kmoskó (1876–1931) in the 1920s.[48] The first volume of his "Muslim Authors on the Steppe Peoples," however, has only recently appeared.[49] Kmoskó also did important research in the Syriac sources for the Steppe peoples which has, also, only recently appeared.[50] The conversion of the Khazars attracted attention in the difficult years of World War II.[51] More recent scholarship dealing with Hungarian origins, too extensive to be discussed in detail here, invariably devotes some attention to the Khazar question.[52] For example, Gyula Kristó has pointed to the impact of Khazar institutions, such as the dual kingship with a sacral king, on early Hungarian political organization.[53] In a later work, translated into English, he touches on these and related themes, presenting his views on the Khazar-Hungarian relationship. He does not believe that this relationship began before the 830s. He places the Qabar revolt in the 810s (he considers the Qabars to be Onoğur-Bulğars) and dates the period of close Hungarian-Khazar alliance to the relatively brief span between 840–860 (in this he follows a suggestion

---

worthy continuation of this tradition may be seen in the joint work of the German Hungarologist Hansgerd Göckenjan and the Hungarian Orientalist István Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte über die Völker Osteuropas und Zentralasiens im Mittelalter. Die Ǧayhânî-Tradition*, Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica, Bd. 54 (Wiesbaden, 2001), which gives full translations and a substantial commentary on the sources.

[48] M. Kmoskó, "Die Quellen Iṣṭachri's in seinem Berichte über die Chasaren" *Kőrösi Csoma Archivum*, I (1921–1925), pp. 141–148, "Araber und Chasaren" *KCsA*, I (1921–1925), pp. 280–292, 356–368 and his "Gardîzî a törökökről" *Századok*, 61 (1927), pp. 149–171.

[49] M. Kmoskó, *Mohamedán írók a steppe népeiről. Földrajzi irodalom*, I/1 (Budapest, 1997).

[50] See K. Czeglédy, "Monographs on Syriac and Muhammadan Sources in the Literary Remains of M. Kmoskó" *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, 4 (1954), pp. 19–91 and M. Kmoskó, *Szír írók a steppe népeiről*, ed. Sz. Felföldi (Budapest, 2004).

[51] Zs. Telegdi, "A kazárok és a zsidóság" *Az Izraelita Magyar Irodalmi Társaság Évkönyve*, 62 (1940), pp. 247–287.

[52] Of recent works, mention may be made of: I. Fodor, *Verecke híres útján* … (Budapest, 1975), Eng.: *In Search of a New Homeland*, trans. H. Tarnoy (Budapest, 1982); the collected studies of Gy, Györffy, *A magyarság keleti elemei* (Budapest, 1990); A. Bartha et al. (eds.), *Magyar őstörténeti tanulmányok* (Budapest, 1977); L. Kovács and L. Veszprémy, *Honfoglalás és nyelvészet* (Budapest, 1997).

[53] Gy. Kristó, *Levedi törzsszövetségétől Szent István államáig* (Budapest, 1980), pp. 82–82. The first chapter of Antal Bartha's *Hungarian Society in the 9th and 10th Centuries* (Budapest, 1975) is largely devoted to the Khazars. Róna-Tas, *A honfoglaló nép*, pp. 268–272/*Hungarians and Europe*, pp. 342–347, downplays the impact of this institution on the early Hungarians during their period of state formation.

of Marquart).[54] Róna-Tas's study of the sources for and ethno-linguistic pre-history of the formation of the Hungarians is both a summation of more than a century of Hungarian scholarship on these questions, many of which directly touch on Khazar history, but also provides many new analyses of problems in Khazar history.[55] The Hungarian contributions, then, have been largely in the area of linguistics and source-analysis and have grown out of concerns within the adjoining field of Hungarian protohistory. Curiously, Hungarian scholars have not yet produced a book on the Khazars themselves.

Russian Historiography and the Khazar Question

While the Hungarian school was heavily focused on linguistic issues, so crucial to the methodology employed in their reconstruction of Hungarian proto-history, Russian and Soviet scholarship, truly on the front-lines of Khazar studies, was broadly historical, with a strong interest in those Oriental sources that also shed important light on the origins of the Rus' state and neighboring peoples of the Russian and Soviet state. Having within its borders the territories in which these nomadic formations and early states were found, it was also natural that there was a very significant archaeological component. Indeed, Russian and Soviet scholars were in a uniquely advantageous position to uncover and use this material.

One of the earliest modern attempts to present what was known about the Khazars was carried out by V.V. Grigor'ev (1816–1881) who in a series of articles that appeared in the 1830s dealt with Khazar political institutions and history. These articles were later collected in his book *Russia and Asia*.[56] This was shortly followed by D.I. Jazykov's monograph on

---

[54] Gy. Kristó, *Hungarian History in the Ninth Century*, trans. Gy. Novák, rev. E. Kelly (Szeged, 1996), esp. chap. XI; J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig, 1903, reprint: Hildesheim, 1961), p. 33.

[55] Róna-Tas, *A honfoglaló nép*, Eng.: *Hunarians and Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, see n. 31.

[56] V.V. Grigor'ev, "O dvojstvennosti verxovnoj vlasti u xazarov," *Žurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveščenija*, 1834, č. III, pp. 279–295, "Obzor političeskoj istorii xazarov" *Syn otečestva* and *Severnyj arxiv*, XLVIII (1835), pp. 566–595, "O drevnix poxodax russkix na vostok" *ŽMNP*, 1845, č. V, pp. 229–287, reprinted in his *Rossija i Azija* (SPb., 1876).

Khazar history in 1840.[57] Some forty-eight years later, P.V. Golubovskij who had previously (1883) published a work on the post-Khazar, pre-Mongol nomad neighbors of Rus' and now had at his disposal the editions and translations of the most important Oriental sources, took up the issue of the Bulğars and Khazars. But, as Artamonov later noted, added little that was new.[58]

Inevitably, Khazar studies became caught up in larger issues which may be placed under the rubric of "Rus' and the Steppe," one of the key themes of medieval Russian historiography up to the present day. The impact of the nomads on issues as diverse as state-formation, political organization, religion, language and the culture of the Eastern Slavic peoples, in particular of the Russians and Ukrainians, has been much debated and engendered an extensive and sophisticated literature.[59] For the pre-Činggisid period much attention has been devoted to political issues, e.g. the question of the role of the Khazar Qağanate and later nomadic polities in the fostering or destruction of the economy of Kievan Rus'. An interest in cultural interaction and borrowing was rare and came largely from the margins, from independent, i.e. institutionally unaffiliated scholars, often with political agendas of their own. I have in mind here the works of the Russian-Jewish scholars Julius Brutzkus (Julij Davidovič Bruckus, 1870–1951) and German Markovič Barac (Baratz, 1835–1922) who sought Hebrew influences, via Khazar intermediation, in Old Rus' culture.[60] A few non-Jewish scholars such as

---

[57] D.I. Jazykov, *Opyt o istorii xazarov* in the *Trudy Imperatorskoj Rossijskoj Akademii*, č. I (SPb., 1840).

[58] P.V. Golubovskij, "Bolgary i xazary—vostočnye sosedi Rusi pri Vladimire Svjatom" *Kievskaja Starina*, XXII (1888); M.I. Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, pp. 20–30. See also Sorlin "Le problème des Khazares," pp. 425–426.

[59] Cf. R.M. Mavrodina, *Kievskaja Rus' i kočevniki (Pečenegi, Torki, Polovcy)* (Leningrad, 1983) and her "Rus' i kočevniki" in V.V. Mavrodin et al. eds. *Sovetskaja istoriografija Kievskoi Rusi* (Leningrad, 1973), pp. 210–221.

[60] Cf. Ju. D. Brutzkus (Bruckus), *Pis'mo xazarskogo evreja* (Berlin, 1924), his *Istoki russkogo evrejstva* (Paris, 1939) and "The Khazar Origin of Ancient Kiev" *Slavonic and East European Review* (May, 1944), pp. 108–124; G.M. Baratz (Barac), *Sobranie trudov po voprosu o evrejskom élemente v pamjatnikax drevne-russkoj pis'mennosti* (Paris, 1927), see also the comments of D.M. Dunlop, "H.M. Baratz and His View of Khazar Influence on the Earliest Russian Historical Literature, Juridical and Historical" in *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 345–367. Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, p. 32, dismissed Brutzkus as "a diletante and fantasizer." Brutzkus, who was for a time minister for Jewish affairs in interwar Lithuania, is frequently mentioned in the memoirs of the most noted Russian-Jewish historian of that era, S.M. Dubnov, *Kniga žizni, Vospominanija i razmyšlenija. Materialy dlja istorii moego vremeni* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1998), pp. 164, 210 et passim. Baratz, however, is completely absent from this important record of the development of Russian-Jewish historiography.

Nikita Aleksandrovič Meščerskij (1907–1987), have more recently also explored these themes.[61]

Russian scholarship early on brought into play the Eastern sources providing editions and translations (into Latin, German and Russian) of key sources, often with learned commentaries. A brief digression on these compilations is in order as they formed the underpinnings of much of the subsequent scholarship. They began with the edition by Christian M. Fraehn (1772–1851) of Ibn Faḍlân's *Risâla* in 1823.[62] Important texts were published in 1842–1844 by Boris Andreevič (Johan Albrecht Bernhard) Dorn (1805–1881), in his "Beiträge zur Geschichte der kaukasischen Länder und Völker aus morgenländischen Quellen," part IV of which contained excerpts from aṭ-Ṭabarî, Ḥâfiz-i Abrû and Ibn Aʿṯam al-Kûfî.[63] Several years later, The Azerbaijani scholar, Mirza A. Kazembeg published the important North Caucasian local chronicle, the Turkic *Derbend-Nâme* with an English translation.[64] From 1869 and into the 1880s, usually within a few years of each other and not always in a spirit of friendly competition, Daniil Avramovič Xvol'son (1819–1911) published his study and translation of Ibn Rusta (whose name he mistakenly read as Ibn Dasta) and Avram Jakovlevič Garkavi [Harkavi] (1835–1919) his collection of Islamic sources on Rus' and the Slavs and Hebrew sources on the Khazars. Both engaged in some heated exchanges over the Jewish inscriptions of the Crimea and the collections of the controversial Karaite scholar Avraam Samuilovič Firkovič (Firkowicz, 1786–1874).[65]

---

[61] N.A. Meščerskij, "Otryvok iz knigi "Iosippon" v "Povesti vremjannyx let" *Palestinskij Sbornik*, 2 (64–65), (1956), pp. 60–67. These views have found wider acceptance, see A.N. Konrad, *Old Russia and Byzantium. The Byzantine and Oriental Origins of Russian Culture*, Philologische Beiträge zur Südost- und Osteuropa- Forschung, volume I (Wien-Stuttgart, 1972), p. 26.

[62] C.M. Fraehn (ed. trans.), *Ibn-Foszlan's und anderer Araber Berichte über Russen älterer Zeit* (SPb., 1823).

[63] "Beiträge zur Geschichte der kaukasischen Länder und Völker aus morgenländischen Quellen. IV Tabary's Nachrichten über die Chasaren, nebst Auszügen aus Hafis Abru, Ibn Aasem-El-Kufy, u.a." *Mémoires de l'Académie impériale des Sciences de Saint-Petersbourg*, VI^{e} série, IV (1840, the "Nachrichten" appeared in 1842), pp. 445–601; see also his "Izvestija o xazarax vostočnogo istorika Tabari," trans. P. Tjaželov, *Žurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveščenija*, XLIII, No. 7, 8 (1844).

[64] Mirza A. Kazem-Beg, *Derbend-Nameh, or the History of Derbend* in the *Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de Saint-Petersbourg*, VI (1951), pp. 435–711.

[65] D.A. Xvol'son, *Izvestija o xozarax, burtasax, bolgarax, mad'jarax, slavjanax i russax Abu-Ali Axmeda ben Omar ibn Dasta* (SPb., 1869), *Sbornik evrejskix nadpisej* (SPb., 1884); A. Ja. Garkavi (Harkavi), *Skazanija musul'manskix pisatelej o slavjanax i russkix* (SPb., 1870), *Skazanija evrejskix pisatelej o xozarax i xozarskom carstve* (SPb, 1874), *Altjüdische Denkmäler aus der Krim* in *Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des*

A culmination point of this phase of Khazar studies was reached with the edition and translation of the then known Khazar Hebrew correspondence along with pertinent extracts from some other Hebrew sources by a student of Xvol'son, the Leningrad Semiticist Pavel Konstantinovič Kokovcov (1861–1942) in 1932. This was a work of enormous erudition which sought to provide the textual and historical basis for the resolution of the problem of the authenticity of the correspondence. In cautious and measured tones, Kokovcov allowed for the authenticity of the Ḥasdai b. Šaprûṭ—King Joseph exchange, which, of course, had suffered the vagaries of time and possible interpolations of later hands. He was much less sanguine about the Cambridge Geniza text, previously published by Solomon Schechter,[66] as a contemporary, i.e. tenth century document. Rather, he saw in it various parallels with the Book of Josippon and posited some possible Byzantine literary work as the source for some of its information.[67]

The focus of the Russian school on key texts, edited and translated with extensive commentaries, was continued in the work of scholars who emigrated in the aftermath of the collapse of the Tsarist Empire, e.g.: the translation by Vladimir Fëdorovič Minorskij (Minorsky, 1877–1966) of the *Ḥudûd al-ʿÂlam*, a work that was discovered by the Russian scholar A.G. Tumanskij in 1882. The full Persian text was only published in 1962 by the Iranian scholar Manučihr Sutûdeh.[68] The first edition of Minorsky's translation, accompanied by an exhaustive commentary, appeared in 1937. The *Ḥudûd* is an anonymous Persian geographical compilation from 982 which contains important notices on the Khazars and their neighbors.[69] In his translation and commentary on the

---

Sciences de Saint-Petersbourg, VII[e] série, XXIV (1877, reprint: Wiesbaden, 1969). On Firkovič, see now V.L. Vixnovič, *Karaim Avraam Firkovič. Evrejskie rukopisi, istorija, putešestvija* (SPb., 1997). Vixnovič also gives brief portraits of Xvol'son (pp. 131–133) and Harkavi (pp. 163–165) which may also be found in A.A. Vigasin et al. (eds.), *Istorija otečestvennogo vostokovedenija s serediny XIX veka do 1917 goda* (Moskva, 1997), pp. 466–473. See also D. Shapira, *Avraham Firkowicz in Istanbul (1830–1832). Paving the Way for Turkish Nationalism* (Ankara, 2003) and the important discoveries on this question by Artem Fedorčuk in this volume.

[66] S. Schechter, "An Unknown Khazar Document" *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s., III (1912), pp. 181–219.

[67] P.K. Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932), esp. pp. v–xxxvi.

[68] *Ḥudûd al-ʿÂlam min al-Mašriq ilâ al-Maġrib*, ed. M. Sutûdeh (Tehran, 1340/1962).

[69] V. Minorsky (trans.), *Ḥudûd al-ʿÂlam. "The Regions of the World" A Persian Geography*, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, n.s. XI (London, 1937, 2nd rev. ed., London, 1970).

Ta'rîḫ al-Bâb, a local North Caucasian chronicle elements of which were preserved in the *Jâmiʿ ad-Duwal* of the seventeenth-early eighteenth century Ottoman historian Müneccimbaşı, Minorsky found hitherto unknown information about Khazar onomastics and a migration, in 1064, of Khazars to the Caucasus.[70]

In 1939, the Baškir emigré historian and political figure, Aḥmad Zeki Validi Togan (1890–1970), published his edition and German translation of the Mašhad manuscript of Ibn Faḍlân's *Risâla*. This account of the latter's journey through Eurasia to Volga Bulğaria, contains unique information about the Khazars and other peoples of the region (the Oğuz, the Rus', the Bulğars etc.). Here too, the text was accompanied by a rich and occasionally problematic commentary and excursi as well as passages from then still unpublished sources such as Ibn Aʿṭam al-Kûfî.[71] A Russian translation with an equally erudite, if less sweeping commentary, was published by the Ukrainian scholar Andrej Petrovič Kovalevskij (Kovalivs'kyj, 1885–1969) that same year and in fuller form in 1956.[72]

These collections and text editions/translations were of enormous importance to not only Khazar studies, but to students of Medieval Russian and East European history as a whole. The tradition of these source-collections was continued by the Polish scholar Tadeusz Lewicki in his corpus of Arabic sources for the history of the Slavs,[73] which has a great deal of information relating to the Khazars accompanied by a very thorough and erudite commentary. A very useful study of one grouping of Muslim sources, the so-called "Caspian Codex" was done by Boris Nikolaevič Zaxoder (1898–1960), which provides translations of some of the more important texts, setting them in an historiographical context.[74] Zaxoder sought to trace the origins of often repeated and

[70] V.F. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvân and Darband* (London, 1958. A slightly revised version appeared in Russian: *Istorija Širvana i Derbenda X–XI vekov* (Moskva, 1963). On Minorsky, who had been a student of Krymskij, see below, see also Vigasin et al. (eds.), *Istorija*, p. 214.

[71] A.Z.V. Togan, *Ibn Faḍlân's Reisebericht*, in the *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, XXIV/3 (Leipzig, 1939).

[72] A.P. Kovalevskij, *Putešestvie Ibn Fadlana na Volgu* (Moskva-Leningrad, 1939) and *Kniga Axmeda ibn Fadlana o ego putešestvii na Volgu v 921–922gg.* (Xar'kov, 1956).

[73] T. Lewicki, *Źródła arabskie do dziejów Słowiańszczyzny* (Wrocław-Kraków-Warszawa, 1956, 1969, 1977, 1988), 4 vols. In another work, dealing this time with Hebrew sources, virtually nothing pertaining to the Khazars is included, see F. Kupfer, T. Lewicki, *Źródła hebrajskie do dziejów Słowian i niektórych innych ludów Środkowej i Wschodniej Europy* (Wrocław-Warszawa, 1956).

[74] B.N. Zaxoder, *Kaspijskij svod svedenij o Vostočnoj Evrope* (Moskva, 1962, 1967).

occasionally garbled notices in this grouping of Muslim authors dealing with Eastern Europe. Chapter III of the first volume is a self-contained 112 page monograph on the Khazars which deals with Khazar origins, the spread of religions in Khazaria, the development of urban life and the political structure of the state closely based on the Arabo-Persian sources. It ably builds on the earlier scholarship and offers some new perspectives as well.

Returning to Russian and Soviet historiographical questions, we may note that nineteenth century European historians, as a whole, tended to take a largely negative view of the nomads and their political and cultural impact.[75] Sergej Mixajlovič Solov'ëv (1820–1879) and Vasilij Osipovič Ključevskij (1841–1911), the doyens of Russian historical writing in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, viewed Russian history as a struggle of the Forest (i.e. the Slavs and ultimately Europe) against the Steppe (the nomads and ultimately Asia), with Rus' standing as the guardian of Europe against the barbarians.[76] Ključevskij, however, in his justly famous *Kurs russkoj istorii* and his *Istorija soslovij v Rossii* takes a more positive view of the Khazar Qağanate, clearly differentiating it from the stateless nomads that followed them. He remarks that the "Khazar yoke," a disputed and emotionally charged label in any event, "had a beneficial effect on the industrial (*promyšlennye*) successes of the Dnepr Slavs." Having taken up "peaceful pursuits," the Khazars opened up access for the Slavs to the Pontic and Caspian markets.[77] A similar stance was taken by Myxajlo Hruševs'kyj (1866–1934), the founder of modern Ukrainian historical studies,[78] who also took a more positive view of the Khazar Qağanate, considering it a "defensive wall" (*zaborolo*) of Eastern Europe against the hordes of Asia."[79] This view was shared

[75] Thus, A.A. Kunik, on the eve of the beginning of Russia's conquest of Central Asia, opined that the nomads were "lower orders of humanity" who should be studied for the same reasons that "the natural sciences subject to observation and scrupulous research the lower imperfect organisms in relation to the most perfect ones," see A.A. Kunik, "Istoričeskie materialy i razyskanija, 2: O Torkskix Pečenegax i Polovcax po mad'jarskim istočnikam," *Učënye Zapiski Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk po pervomu i treťemu otdeleniju*, 3 (1955), p. 714.

[76] Both have recently been reprinted: S.M. Solov'ëv, *Istorija Rossii s drevnejšix vremën* in his *Sočinenija* (Moskva, 1988–1996), I/1–2, pp. 352, 357, 383, 647–648; V.O. Ključevskij, *Kurs russkoj istorii* i his *Sočinenija* (Moskva, 1987–1990), I, pp. 282 ff.

[77] See his *Sočinenija*, I, pp. 138–140, VI, pp. 252–253.

[78] M.S. Hruševs'kyj, *Istorija Ukraïny-Rusy* (L'viv, 1904–1922, reprint Kyïv, 1992–1996), I, 203 ff.; II, pp. 505–506, 530, 533.

[79] Hruševs'kyj, *Istorija Ukraïny-Rusy*, I, p. 230.

by the Russian medievalist Matvej Kuz'mič Ljubavskij (1860–1936), Ključevskij's successor.[80] In brief, the Khazars provided protective cover allowing for Slavic colonization and commercial access to the powerful southern economies of the Mediterranean Basin. This view was also typical of the Eurasianist school. The emigré scholar George Vernadsky [Georgij Vladimirovič Vernadskij, 1887–1973], in the 1930s, saw the Khazars as the "defenders of the trade routes in the Lower Volga" who by the early ninth century were extending their power to Kiev.[81] This approach also found adherents in the new, Soviet-era scholarship. Jurij Vladimirovič Goťe (Gauthier, 1873–1943) in an article entitled "Khazar Culture" which appeared in 1925, presented the Khazars not so much as conquerors, but rather as unifiers, who followed a policy of tolerance producing a *pax chazarica* in the region.[82]

This benign view of the Khazars is held by a number of Russian and Ukrainian scholars today.[83] Others, however, such as the distinguished Ukrainian medievalist, Academician Petro Petrovyč Toločko saw Rus' as locked in "a constant struggle" with Khazaria.[84] The nomads, including the Khazars, he considers a destructive force who ultimately "had a negative impact on the economic development of the border principalities."[85]

Although the Khazars might be granted a more positive role by some, on the whole, the assessment of the role of the nomads in the history of the Eastern Slavs was negative and this was typical of many of the leading figures in Russian and Ukrainian history writing in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (figures such as N.I. Kostomarov, P.V. Golubovskij, N.Ja. Aristov, P.N. Miljukov, G.V. Plexanov and others),[86] and

---

[80] M.K. Ljubavskij, *Lekcii po drevnej russkoj istorii do konca XVI veka* (Moskva, 1918), pp. 43–45. He was also the author of major works on historical geographical and Russian colonization, *Istoričeskaja geografija Rossii* (Moskva, 1909, reprinted St. Petersburg, 2000) and *Obzor istorii russkoj kolonizacii s drevnejšix vremën i do XXX veka*, written in the early 1930s, but only published in Moscow, in 1996.

[81] G.V. Vernadskij (Vernadsky), *Opyt istorii evrazii* (Berlin, 1934), p. 51.

[82] N.B. Goťe, "Xazarskaja kul'tura" *Novyj Vostok* (1925), kn. 8–9, pp. 277, 292.

[83] See V.Ja. Petruxin, *Načalo étnokul'turnoj istorii Rusi IX–XI vekov* (Moskva, 1995), p. 87.

[84] P.P. Toločko, *Kyïvs'ka Rus'* (Kyïv, 1996), p. 39.

[85] P.P. Toločko, *Drevnjaja Rus'* (Kiev, 1987), p. 159. These views are little softened in his recent *Kočevye narody stepej i Kievskaja Rus'* (St. Petersburg, 2003) which concludes (pp. 158–159) that despite their military superiority, the nomads were absorbed by the sedentary population, which was bolstered by their "organic unity with their land."

[86] See discussion in Mavrodina, *Kievskaja Rus'*, pp. 17–19, 21–23, 30–31, 34, 36, 38.

continued into the Soviet era (cf. the work of B.D. Grekov, V.T. Pašuto, V.V. Kargalov).[87] In the early 1950s, domestic politics intervened, exacerbating even further the Khazar question in Soviet scholarship. A brief article in *Pravda* by a certain "Ivanov" in 1951 criticized as exaggerated the positive role that had been attributed to Khazaria in early Rus' history by some scholars, in particular Mixail Ilarionovič Artamonov. Boris Aleksandrovič Rybakov, one of the commanding figures in Soviet Medieval Rus' studies, now wrote several sharply negative articles on the role of the Khazars in Rus' history, considerably downplaying their importance and relegating them to the position of a minor khanate. Indeed, the Khazars became almost taboo. This was largely in connection with political events in the Soviet Union revolving around the so-called "Doctors' Plot" and the campaign against "Cosmopolitanism"[88] with its thinly veiled anti-Semitism.

In such an atmosphere and given the Judaic component of the Khazar question, Khazar studies, which were now almost exclusively in the hands of archaeologists led by Artamonov, sustained "a crushing blow," as Svetlana A. Pletnëva recounted in an article that appeared in 1990. In a book that appeared in that same year, the late Anatolij Petrovič Novosel'cev (discussed below) wrote in much the same vein, remarking that Dunlop (see below) was able to publish his book (1954) before Artamonov "in large measure because of the situation which obtained in our historical science in the late 40s and early 50s." By 1958, the atmosphere had changed to some degree. Artamonov, who published

---

[87] B.D. Grekov, *Kievskaja Rus'* in his *Izbrannye sočinenija* (Moskva, 1959), II, pp. 373–375; V.T. Pašuto, "Ob osobennosti struktury Drevnerusskogo gosudarstva" in A.P. Novosel'cev, V.T. Pašuto et al. (eds.), *Drevnerusskoe gosudarstvo i ego meždunarodnoe značenie* (Moskva, 1965), p. 98; V.V. Kargalov, *Vnešnepolitičeskie faktory razvitija feodal'noj Rusi* (Moskva, 1967), p. 57. The recent study by Vaščenko, "*Xazarskaja problema*", chaps. 1–2 explores these themes in detail.

[88] Cf. his "K voprosu o roli Xazarskogo kaganata v istorii Rusi" *Sovetskaja Arxeologija*, 18 (1953), pp. 128–150. Vaščenko, *"Xazarskaja problema,"* pp. 77–78, outlines Rybakov's views, notes his agreement in this regard with Boris Dmitrievič Grekov, another leading figure in the study of the Rus' state and points to connections with the views of Dmitrij I. Ilovajskij, a nineteenth century historian whose name could not be invoked because of his "monarchist" political views. Shnirelman, *The Myth*, pp. 9–10, however shows that Ilovajskij was so preoccupied with the "Normanist controversy," that the Khazars were, essentially, "beyond the scope of his interest." Shnirelman, pp. 24–43, in his comments on the "Artamonov Affair," provides a far more detailed analysis of the twists and turns of Soviet historiography on this issue and on the question of "Cosmopolitanism."

his article on Sarkel[89] that year, could write that "Khazaria was, at that time, a great state (*bol'šim gosudarstvom*) which included various tribes inhabiting the southern half of the European part of our country." Pletnëva viewed this statement as significant, a signal that Khazar studies had not perished.[90] Nonetheless, in his 1962 "History of the Khazars" (discussed below), Artamonov, while criticizing those who denied the historical importance of the Khazars, still, apparently, felt constrained to say that the *Pravda* article "had played a positive role drawing the attention of historians to the undoubted idealization of the Khazars in bourgeois scholarship and the exaggeration of their significance in the formation of the Rus' state…" For good measure, Khazar religious tolerance was declared a "myth."[91] Despite the "thaw," Novosel'cev notes that this "fundamental work" of Artamonov could, nonetheless, only be published in Leningrad by the publishing house of the Hermitage whose director Artamonov then was.[92]

The issue is by no means an historical relic and a lively debate over the nature and impact of Khazar-Rus' interaction continues. Novosel'cev, agreeing with Hruševs'kyj and Ljubavskij that the Khazar presence allowed for Slavic expansion suggested that the Slavs of the 7th–8th centuries were the "natural allies of the Khazars."[93] Lev Nikolaevič Gumilëv took a very different tack. He embraced the Cumans, a Turkic tribal confederation hitherto considered the traditional *bête noire* of Russian history, as an autonomous yet integral part of Rus', the two polities forming "a unitary Russo-Polovtsian system," part of a common "polycentric state" with the Rus'.[94] The Cumans' previous role as villains was now

---

[89] A Khazar fortress, now submerged, built with Byzantine aid on the left bank of the Don River. Its construction has been variously dated to the 830s. C. Zuckerman, "Two Notes on the Early History of the *Thema* of Cherson" *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 21 (1997), pp. 210–222, makes a strong argument for its construction in 840–841.

[90] M.I. Artamonov, "Sarkel—Belaja Veža" in *Trudy Volgo-donskoj arxelolgičeskoj ékspedicii*, t. I, in *Materialy i Issledovanija po Arxeologii SSSR*, No. 62 (1958), p. 7; S.A. Pletnëva, "Xazarskie problemy v arxeologii: *Sovetskaja Arxeologija* (1990), No. 2, pp. 77–78, see also her most recent publication *Očerki xazarskoj arxeologii* (Moskva-Ierusalim, 1999), p. 9. Some other details are also recounted in Pletnëva's reminiscences about Artamonov: "Vspominaja M.I. Artamonova" in *Materialy po Arxeologii, Istorii i Étnogra'i Tavrii*, vyp. VI (Simferopol', 1998), esp. pp. 26–27.

[91] Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, pp. 37–38.

[92] See A.P. Novosel'cev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo i ego rol' v istorii Vostočnoj Evropy i Kavkaza* (Moskva, 1990), p. 54.

[93] Novosel'cev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 185–185, 202, see pp. 45–66 for a thoughtful historiographical survey of Khazar-Rus' relations.

[94] See Gumilëv, *Poiski*, pp. 311–312 and his *Drevnjaja Rus' i Velikaja Step'*, p. 327.

replaced by the Jews, Khazarian and others.[95] Indeed, this anti-Khazar school of the Soviet era (associated with Rybakov and Gumilëv) reached such a fever pitch that, as Vladimir Ja. Petruxin has commented, Khazaria came to take on the "features of an almost metaphysical kingdom of evil, the bearer of a yoke more fearsome than that of the Tatars."[96] Petruxin was here responding to the remarks of V. Kožinov who wrote that "the Khazar yoke was, without doubt, much more dangerous for Rus' than that of the Tatar-Mongols, in part because Rus' was only a developing nation (*narodnost'*), state structure (*gosudarstvennost'*) and culture." The struggle, he argued, however, only served to strengthen Rus'. Kožinov claimed that the Khazar problem remained a serious one for Rus' into the reign of Jaroslav I (undisputed ruler 1036–1054), well after the Rus' destruction of the Khazar capital and core lands on the Lower Volga and Don region in 965–969.[97]

More recently, however, a post-Soviet study of Islam in the history of Russia by R.G. Landa, once again, underscores the importance of Khazaria in putting the Rus' of the eighth-ninth century in contact with the Arabian Caliphate, one of the great centers of world culture. From the Khazars, he suggests, the Rus' gained important experience in administering a polyethnic and multiconfessional state.[98] The debate continues.

Modern Scholarship on the Khazars

With these necessary prefatory remarks, we can now turn to modern scholarship that deals with the totality of Khazar history and culture. Chronologically, we could say that modern Khazarology, in essence, begins with Mixail I. Artamonov's 1936 study on the early history of the Khazars.[99] But, this was really a warm up for his *magnum opus*, the

---

[95] See his *Drevnjaja Rus' i Velikaja step'* in which a thinly veiled anti-semitism is a consistent theme in his chapters dealing with the Pre-Činggisid era. This work (and some others) are also marred by theories of ethnicity that are more in keeping with the *Rassengeschichte* of Pre-World War II Central Europe than with modern scholarship. These issues are thoroughly discussed by Shnirelman, *The Myth of the Khazars*.

[96] Petruxin, *Načalo étnokul'turnoj istorii*, pp. 83–84.

[97] V. Kožinov in his "Tvorčestvo Ilariona i istoričeskaja real'nost' ego époxi" in *Voprosy Literatury*, No. 12 (1988), pp. 140–141. Kožinov, here, was following the thesis put forward by S.A. Pletnëva, *Kočevniki srednevekov'ja* (Moskva, 1982". pp. 17, 120.

[98] R.G. Landa, *Islam v istorii Rossii* (Moskva, 1995), pp. 32, 33.

[99] M.I. Artamonov, *Očerki drevnejšej istorii xazar* (Moskva, 1936)

Istoriija xazar the publication of which was delayed by World War II and the difficult political circumstances of Stalin's last years, appearing finally in 1962. In that intervening period, however, Artamonov's "History of the Khazars" was preceded by several substantial studies. Artamonov was aware of these works and was able to draw on and use their data and conclusions.

The Israeli scholar A.N. Poliak, known for his studies on the Mamlûks and the Arab world, published an article (1942) on the Khazar conversion to Judaism, which is included and reworked in his monograph on Khazaria that appeared in 1942 and in revised versions in 1944 and 1951. These remained largely unknown. Addressing a variety of issues, Poliak suggested that the Khazar state continued until the thirteenth century. He sought the origins of Eastern European Jewry in Khazaria and hypothesized that Yiddish stemmed from Crimean Gothic.[100]

The Polish Qaraite Turkologist Ananiasz Zajączkowski published his "Studies on the Khazar Problem" (*Ze studiow nad zagadnieniem*) in 1947, a reconstruction in part of his *Bibliografia chazarska*, which was destroyed in Warsaw in 1944. Its most important feature is its underscoring of the Turkic character of the Khazars, with some discussion of the Khazar linguistic fragments which he viewed as Qıpčaq in character. In this study and especially in other works, Zajączkowski attempted to demonstrate that the Qıpčaq Turkic-speaking Qaraim of Eastern Europe were the "heirs" of the Khazars.[101] This view, not original with Zajączkowski, still has some adherents today, especially among some other East European Karaite scholars, but not exclusively limited to them. Indeed, its first proponents were nineteenth century Christian scholars who were first beginning to explore this small, Turkic-speaking, East European branch of what had been a larger, sectarian movement within the Mediterranean Jewish world.[102]

---

[100] A.N. Poliak, *Ḫazariyyah. Toldot mamlaḫa yehudit be-Eropa* (Tel-Aviv, 1942, 1944, 1951). Novoseľcev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 52–53 has a brief discussion of Poliak's book, pointing, in particular, to his interesting discussion of the Khazar economy and its role in world trade, the spread of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Khazaria and the search for post-965 Khazar heirs.

[101] Cf. his "O kulturze chazarskiej i jej spadkobiercach" *Myśl Karaimska* (1946), pp. 5–34; *Karaims in Poland* (Warsaw-Paris-La Haye, 1961), pp. 20–23.

[102] Cf. the various works of S. Szyszman, "Le roi Bulan et le problème de la conversion des Khazars" *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 33 (1957), "Les Khazars. Problèmes et controvérses" *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 152 (1957), pp. 174–221, *Les Karaïtes d'Europe* (Uppsala, 1989); A. Dubiński, "Die Karaimen. Eine türkische Minderheit des alttestamentischen Glaubens" *Acta Orientalia Belgica* 6 (1991), pp. 213–225,

Of much greater significance was the book by the British scholar, Douglas Morton Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, which appeared in 1954. Dunlop's book has remained one of the fundamental works on the Khazars and can be considered the true beginning of modern Khazar studies. It is a work of meticulous and fair-minded scholarship. It built, in part, on the materials that had been gathered by the German Semiticist Paul Kahle and the Belgian Byzantinist Henri Grégoire who had planned to collaborate on a book on the Khazars. World War II dashed those hopes and Kahle offered the task to Dunlop who translated the most important Muslim accounts pertaining to the Khazars, gave an exhaustive analysis of the Khazar Hebrew correspondence and put together a coherent account of Khazar history, in particular of the Arab-Khazar wars and relations with Byzantium and the Rus'. He was particularly interested in the chronology of the conversion, translating and analyzing all the Muslim and Hebrew sources on this subject. Dunlop also discussed the causes for the decline of the Khazar state concluding that the Khazar economy was "highly artificial" and heavily "dependent on political prestige and military strength" by which it secured tribute and taxed the trade passing through its realm. When Khazar military might weakened, "the whole economy was liable to collapse." Like many nomadic states "far from self-sufficient," this economic Achilles' heel and the agglomerating nature of the Khazar state rendered it "incapable in the long run of forming a permanently stable political and economic unit."[103]

---

reprinted in his *Caraimica. Prace karaimoznawcze* (Warszawa, 1994), pp. 37–48 ; M.É. Xafuz, *Karaimy* in the series *Narody i Kul'tury*, vyp. XIV (Moskva, 1993); V.I. Kefeli, É.I. Lebedeva, *Karaimy—drevnij narod Kryma* (Simferopol', 2003). This perspective has also been adopted by the Turkish scholar Ş. Kuzgun, *Türklerde Yahudilik ve Doğu Avrupa Yahudilerinin Menşei Meselesi Hazar ve Karay Türkleri* 2nd ed. (Ankara, 1993), among others. On the recasting of Qaraim identity, see R. Freund, *Karaites and Dejudaization* in Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion, 30 (Stockholm, 1991); Shapira, *Abraham Firkowicz in Istanbul* and his articles "A Jewish Pan-Turkist: Seraya Szapszal (Şapşaloğlu) and his Work *Qırım Qaray Türkleri* (1928)" *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58/4 (2005), pp. 349–380 and "Remarks on Avraham Firkowicz and the Hebrew '*Mejelis* Document' " *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 59/2 (2006), pp. 136–137; M. Kizilov, *Karaites Through Travellers' Eyes* (New York, 2003), pp. 62–71 and his new study, co-authored with D. Mikhaylova, "The Khazar Kagante and the Khazars in European Nationalist Ideologies and Scholarship" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 14 (2005), pp. 31–53; F. Astren, *Karaite Judaism and Historical Understanding* (Columbia, South Carolina, 2004), pp. 274–276. De-judaization, a survival strategy that was fully developed in the early twentieth century, has largely become "canonical" within the now dwindling East European Karaite community.

[103] Dunlop, *History*, pp. 233–234. See the very different conception of the Khazar economy in Thomas Noonan's contribution to this volume.

Artamonov considered Dunlop's book "a major event in Khazar historiography," summarizing all the available data that had been gathered over the previous hundred years. But, he criticized it for not opening up "new horizons."[104] In point of fact, Dunlop did have many new things to say.[105] But this was always done in measured tones. Dunlop was, no doubt, cautious—and that was probably a good thing. There had been all sorts of speculation about the Khazars and Dunlop brought it down to earth. Those data that could be established on the basis of the literary sources were confirmed. A reasonable reconstruction of Khazar political history was established. The more serious of the various theories and hypotheses were analyzed. In short, a solid foundation was built for future work. The work has stood the test of time.

In addition to these studies, Artamonov was also able to build on an already substantial tradition of Khazar scholarship in Russia and abroad.[106] Artamonov, however, only noted in passing[107] the work of the Ukrainian Orientalist Ahatanhel Juxymovyč Kryms'kyj [A.E. Krymskij, 1871–1942] whose "Prolegomena to the History of the Khazars" appeared in 1941. This study, which also dealt with the Khazar language, is a bibliographical rarity. I have never seen it and it is not noted in the two biographies of Kryms'kyj that appeared in 1971 and 1980. It was apparently part of a larger two volume work on the Khazars written in Ukrainian that remains in manuscript.[108] Novosel'cev mentions Kryms'kyj's interest in the Khazar language without citing any of his work.[109] The publication of this study (Kryms'kyj was an outstanding scholar) or sections from it (it may be dated in some respects) would still be of value.

Artamonov's "History of the Khazars" was a sweeping survey of the history of the Western Eurasian steppes and owes something to the Eurasianist school in this regard.[110] It was clear that the Khazars could

---

[104] Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, p. 34.

[105] See the more positive comments of Novosel'cev, *Gosudarstvo*, pp. 53–54.

[106] We cannot cite all the literature here, but we might single out, as Artamonov did, the study of I. Berlin, *Istoričeskie sud'by evrejskogo naroda na territorii russkogo gosudarstva* (Petrograd, 1919) which Artamonov termed "a serious work" which had been little noted in the Khazarological literature, see Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, p. 32. Berlin has an interesting analysis of Khazar and Jewish toponymy in Eastern Europe.

[107] Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, p. 34 n. 151.

[108] A. Kryms'kyj, "Prolehomena do istorii xazariv, zvidky vony vzjalysja i jaka їx mova" *Movoznavstvo* (Kyïv, 1941)? See K.I. Hurnyc'kyj, *Kryms'kyj jak istoryk* (Kyïv, 1971), pp. 30–31 and his *Agafangel Efimovič Krymskij* (Moskva, 1980), pp. 157–158.

[109] Novosel'cev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 50, 64 n. 31.

[110] One might note here George Vernadsky's *Ancient Russia* (New Haven, 1943) and his *The Origins of Russia* (Oxford, 1959).

be properly understood only within this larger Eurasian context and Artamonov effectively brought this point home. In addition to a close reading of the literary sources, Artamonov, as the leader of the Don and Daghestanian archaeological expeditions in the territories of the Khazar state, brought to his work a wealth of knowledge of the archaeology of the region, an area largely neglected by most of his predecessors. His "History of the Khazars," however, was much more oriented towards the written sources. Unfortunately, Artamonov was able to use these sources only in translations. He also turned to L.N. Gumilëv, a scholar often given to sweeping, unsubstantiated generalizations and who was equally ignorant of Oriental languages, for advice on the history of the Türks.[111] Artamonov concluded that many of the Turkic peoples of Western Eurasia were Turkicized Ugrians, a thesis for which we have no concrete evidence. Indeed, the history of the Hungarians, the best known of the Ugric peoples who came into close contact with the Turkic world, shows that although they were profoundly influenced by Turkic culture and language, they remained Ugric in speech. Artamonov also connected the Khazar ruling house with the Ashina [A-shih-na] derived rulers of the Western Türks—a thesis that has been criticized by some (such as Novoseľcev)[112] and given a more favorable reception by others (e.g. Golden).[113] He correctly recognized the complex, polyethnic composition of the Khazar state which encompassed a number of different types of economy. He declared Khazaria the "first feudal state" in Eastern Europe. Although there are many definitions of feudalism, I am not at all certain that the Khazar state would fit any of them. The presence of a paid standing army, most probably the الارسية (*al-Ursiyya* = the *Ors*), can hardly constitute feudalism. Rather, it has much more to do with the *comitatus* institution in Eurasian states, a potential embryo for feudalism. Following an already established theme, Artamonov saw a positive role for the Khazars in Rus' history, serving as a shield against the onslaughts of other Eurasian nomads. Khazaria's wars with the expanding Umayyad Caliphate also contributed to the survival of Byzantium

[111] Gumilëv was then working on his *Drevnie Tjurki* (Moskva, 1967).

[112] Novoseľcev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo*, p. 55.

[113] Golden, *Khazar Studies*, I, pp. 59, 219–221. The clan or tribal name transcribed in the Chinese sources as A-shih-na has most recently been etymologized by S.G. Kljaštornyj as deriving from Iranian *Âššeina* "blue" = the *Kök Türk*s, see S.G. Kljaštornyj, D.G. Savinov, *Stepnye imperii Evrazii* (SPb., 1994), pp. 13–14 and his "The Royal Clan of the Turks and the Problem of Early Turkic-Iranian Contacts" *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, XLVII/3 (1994), pp. 445–447.

and led to an alliance of the latter with the Khazars. Like Dunlop, he saw the Khazars as checking the Arab advance into Eastern Europe. Artamonov dated the beginnings of the Khazar conversion to Judaism to the 730s. In the early ninth century, the "king" or Qağan-Beg, Obadiyah, he conjectured, seized power, forced the government and Qağan to accept Judaism as the state religion and thus touched off a civil war and sacralized the Qağanal line, creating the Khazar dual kingship. The Hungarians and Oğuz were brought in by competing factions of the Khazar elite. The triumphant Judaizers then persecuted the Christian and Muslim communities.[114] This hypothetical reconstruction is based on Constantine Porphyrogenitus's notice on the Qabars who joined the Hungarian union after having been defeated in a civil war in Khazaria and on the comment in King Joseph's letter that one of his ancestors, Obadiyah, a successor of Bulan to whom the conversion is attributed, "renewed the kingdom and strengthened the faith,…built synagogues and schools of learning and gathered the wise men of Israel"[115] This thesis was followed and further developed by Pletnëva[116] and has influenced the work of Pritsak and others.[117] The whole of this edifice rests on nothing more than a conjecture.[118] We do not know when Obadiyah lived nor the precise nature of his reforms. Constantine says nothing about the date of the Qabar revolt—although it clearly appears to have taken place before the Hungarian migration to Pannonia. We do not know if the Qabars were Judaized or not. If the recent finds at Čelarevo (in Yugoslavia) are, indeed, Qabar, then there is evidence that they may have practiced Judaism.[119] One does not have to seek religion-based strife for the origins of dual kingships and sacral monarchies. They are found throughout Eurasia. Moreover, how would the sacralization of

---

[114] Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, pp. 278–282, 324 ff.

[115] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio* ed. Gy. Moravcsik, trans. R. Jenkins (Wasington, D.C., 1967), pp. 174/175; Kokovcov, *Perepiska*, Heb. text, pp. 21–24, 28–31/trans. pp. 75–80, 92–97.

[116] S.A. Pletnëva, *Xazary* (Mosvka, 2nd ed., 1986), pp. 62 ff.

[117] Pritsak, "The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion" *HUS*, II (1978), pp. 278–280. See also Nagrodzka-Majchrzyk, in K. Dąbrowski, T. Nagrodyka-Majchryzk, E. Tryjarski, *Hunowie europejscy, Protobułgarzy, Chazarowie, Pieczyngowie* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1975), p. 400.

[118] For a critique of this thesis, see P.B. Golden, "Khazaria and Judaism" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, III (1983), pp. 144 ff.

[119] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, pp. 216–217. On the complexities of interpreting the Čelarevo finds, see R. Bunardžič, "Čelarevo—nekropol' i poselenie VII–IX vekov" in *Xazary*, ed. V. Petruxin, V. Moskovič et al. in *Evrei i Slavjane* 16 (Ierusalim-Moskva, 2005), pp. 522–531.

the once pagan Qağanal line fit in with a program of Jewish reform? Although there were individual incidents in which Khazar rulers in the tenth century repressed specific groupings of Muslims and Christians, in retaliation for persecutions of Jews in the Islamic lands and Byzantium, the Muslim sources report that the Khazar government provided judicial institutions for each of the confessional communities, Jewish, Christian and Muslim and even a judge for the pagans.[120] Regrettably, we know relatively little about the internal dynamics of religion and state in Khazaria. We need to know a lot more before such conjectures can be elevated to the status of established fact.

Artamonov concluded his work on an unfortunate note. After noting the Khazars' positive contributions, the *pax chazarica*, he concluded that the adoption of the Jewish religion was "a fatal step." It severed the government from the people, replaced pastoral nomadism and agriculture with mercantile middlemen and led to the "parasitic enrichment of the ruling elite" whose power rested on the hired lances of their Muslim guard. "Talmudic learning did not affect the masses, remaining the privilege of a few. From that time, the role of the Khazar Qağanate became sharply negative…" He ended by saying that "all the wealth gathered by the Judaic merchants in Itil could not buy the hearts of the Slavs who were settling the forest-steppelands, the Black Sea steppe peoples—the Pečenegs, the nomads of the trans-Uralian plain—the Oğuz, the Alans who occupied the mountain ravines of the Middle Caucasus and the Bulğars who inhabited the Azov shores." In short, Judaism, according to Artamonov, destroyed Khazaria.[121] None of this is supported by documentation or scholarly argument.

The adoption of one or another of the universal, monotheistic faiths is an important theme in the history of the various peoples of Eurasia. In some instances, conversion initially caused considerable internal strife, but nowhere did it bring about the decline and fall of the polity. Often, the reverse was true. In no other instance, in the modern scholarship on the peoples of Eurasia,[122] do we find the claim made that conversion

---

[120] Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, ed. De Goeje, p. 221, al-Masʿûdî, *Murûj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 214.

[121] Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, pp. 457–458.

[122] Contemporary, rival faiths, of course had a different perspective. The Zoroastrian *Dênkart* (last redaction in the tenth century) attributed the decline of Rome to Christianity, of the Khazars to Judaism and of the Uyğurs to Manichaeanism, see M. Molé, *La legende de Zoroastre selon textes pehlevis* (Paris, 1967), pp. 236–7.

from paganism to a monotheistic faith was the cause of the state's collapse. The development among other Turkic peoples of similar religious and intellectual institutions, including a scholarly class, the functional equivalent of the rabbinate (e.g. the Islamic *'ulamâ'*), did not cut off the rulers from ruled nor lead to the loss of martial vigor or produce societal collapse. Khazaria's immediate neighbor, Volga Bulğaria, is an example of conversion (in this case Islam) and the establishment of a full range of Islamic religious and religio-intellectual institutions. Volga Bulğaria thrived until it was subsumed by the tide of Činggisid Mongol conquests. The weaknesses of Khazaria were typical of aging nomadic states that were facing vigorous newcomers (in this instance the Pečenegs and the Rus') and the growing enmity of powerful sedentary neighbor states, in Khazaria's case, its onetime "partner" Byzantium. A decline in revenue resulting from shifts in or the emergence of new trade patterns may have also played a role. Artamonov's thesis is not based on facts and its anti-Semitic undertones sadly mar a work that otherwise has many important merits.

L.N. Gumilëv's sometimes fanciful work aimed at a popular audience, the "Discovery of Khazaria," appeared in 1966. It presented the results of archaeological field expeditions in the Don, Volga delta and North Caucasus. Although positive results were achieved in the Don and North Caucasus, Gumilëv concluded that the Khazar capital, Itil, in the Volga delta had been submerged due to hydrological changes.[123]

In 1967, Svetlana Aleksandrovna Pletnëva, a student of Artamonov, published her "From Nomad Camps to Towns," dealing with the transition of nomadic peoples in the Pontic-Caspian steppes from nomadism to semi-sedentary or sedentary life during the Khazar era, largely based on archaeological materials.[124] Pletnëva distinguishes between three different forms or stages of nomadism ranging from: 1) year-round almost nonstop nomadizing (*tabornoe kočevanie*), 2) nomadism with permanent winter quarters in which the population migrates during the Spring until the Fall and 3) a nomadic system in which one part of the populaces nomadizes while the other has sedentarized. Her analysis of the Saltovo-Majaki culture, which is associated with one part of the Khazar realm, shows the movement of this population through all three stages. She concluded that the Arabo-Khazar wars had a negative

[123] See Gumilëv, *Otkrytie Xazarii* in his *Sočinenija*, VI.
[124] S.A. Pletnëva, *Ot kočevij k gorodam* (Moskva, 1967).

impact on the nomads forcing many who had lost their herds to sedentarize. We have no evidence to support this contention. The Khazar dual kingship she saw, at this time, as stemming from the confederational nature of the Khazar union and the belief in the divine power of the Qağan which resulted in his tabooization. The power of the "king" grew gradually and the shift in de facto power to the "king," who was a "feudal lord," occurred peacefully. The third phase which entailed the denomadization of substantial elements of the population produced the feudalization of the state. The whole question of "steppe feudalism" remains very murky, at best, and the evidence, beyond conjecture, to buttress these arguments is not presented. Nevertheless, this is a very significant work with much to say for the study of some of the Western Eurasian steppe polities. In particular, it may really have more to do with the Alans and Pontic Bulğars who were under Khazar rule than with the Khazars themselves.

In 1976 Pletnëva published a brief, popular work, "The Khazars" which was reprinted with some changes in 1986. In it, she further developed Artamonov's thesis about Obadiyah and the negative impact of the conversion to Judaism, which separated the (in her presentation) small clique of Judaized Khazars, the Qağan and the Itil aristocracy, from the rest of Khazar society and weakened an already shaky state foundation. The ensuing civil war, between the Judaized Itil aristocracy and the non-Jewish provincial aristocracy (which included Christians and Muslims) produced a "Khazar fronde." The civil war, she concluded, greatly weakened the Khazar state.[125] Again, this all rests on conjectures and arbitrary assumptions. Some of her conclusions may have been driven by political pressures.[126]

An attempt at summarizing and synthesizing the materials on the Khazars, closely following the work of Soviet scholars was made by the Polish scholar Teresa Nagrodzka-Majchrzyk in her "Chazarowie," a small monograph contained in a larger work, published in 1975 that dealt with the European Huns, Proto-Bulğars and Pečenegs as well. In keeping with the format of the larger work, there are interesting and useful sections devoted to what little we know of social and economic

---

[125] Pletnëva, *Xazary*, esp. pp. 62 ff. on the Khazar civil war. A German translation of the first edition, *Die Chasaren* (Leipzig, 1978) also appeared.

[126] Kizilov and Mikhaylova, "Khazar Kaganate" *AEMAe* 14 (2005), p. 52 write that Pletnëva "was forced to show to the commuists the parasitic character of the Khazar state under the heavy weight of Soviet ideological pressure."

matters in Khazaria, health and hygiene, the martial arts, daily life, living conditions etc. Uncritically following Artamonov's lead, however, she also saw in Judaization the "germ of the fall of the Khazar state."[127]

Of some interest to Khazar studies was the jointly authored work of Jakov Aleksandrovič Fëdorov and Gadži Saidovič Fëdorov dealing with the "Early Turks in the North Caucasus" which appeared in 1978.[128] It placed, quite correctly, the development of a Turkic core in the North Caucasus to Khazar times deriving from tribes that had been coming to the region since the Hunnic invasions. It also sought there the origins, at least in part, of the Kumyks (deriving them also from local, Caucasian elements) and the Qaračay-Balqars (the latter stemming rather from Qıpčaqicized Alanic elements).[129] These issues are by no means resolved and the question of the Khazar legacy among the Turkic-speaking peoples of the North Caucasus requires much more work.

In 1978 there also appeared Omeljan Pritsak's article on the Khazar conversion to Judaism.[130] Here he briefly set forth his views on Khazar origins, promising to deal with the problem in depth in later volumes of his *Origin of Rus'*. He, too, traced the origins of the Khazar qağanal house to the Ashina West Türk ruling clan, but put forward the theory that they took over the territory of the earlier Akatzirs from whom he derives the ethnonym *Khazar*. The future "kingly," i.e. non-qağanal clan of the Barč/Warâz/Bolčân, the *Ixšâd/Beg/Yillig* [*Yilig/Yelig*] line of the Muslim sources, according to him, as well as the Qabars and others also came from the West Türk state. Sometime between 799–833, he suggests, the Beg had become the effective co-ruler of the state. During that same period, the Beg converted to Judaism (as noted by al-Masʿûdî) and in the aftermath of the Qabar revolt/civil war (probably between 833–843), the Qağan lost all effective power and the institution of the Qağanate

---

[127] Nagrodzka-Majchrzyk, "Chazarowie" in Dąbrowski et al., *Hunowie europejscy, Protobułgarzy, Chazarowie, Pieczyngowie*, pp. 377–477, esp. pp. 448–449.

[128] Ja. A. Fëdorov, G.S. Fëdorov, *Rannie tjurki na Severnom Kavkaze* (Moskva, 1978).

[129] Some modern Qaračay-Balqar scholars have claimed that the Iranian Scythians, Sarmatian and Alans were Turkic, cf. the monographs of I. Miziev, *Šagi k istokam étničeskoj istorii central'nogo Kavkaza* (Nal'čik, 1986, available to me only in an Azeri translation, *Merkezi Gafgaz'ın Etnik Tarihinin Köklerine Doğru*, Istanbul, 1993) and his *Istorija karačaevo-balkarskogo naroda s drevnejšix vremën do prisoedinenija k Rossii* in *As-Alan* 1 (Moskva, 1998), pp. 1–100. The scholarly consensus, of long standing, is that the Alans were Iranian, see most recently the exhaustive study of A. Alemany, *Sources on the Alans. A Critical Compilation* (Leiden, 2000).

[130] O. Pritsak, "The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, II (1978), pp. 261–281.

was Judaized as well. Subsequently, in later articles, Pritsak advanced the theory that the Rus' Qağanate stemmed from the Khazar Qağan who was "forced . . . to emigrate" in the 830s due to "religious controversy," the attempt of the Barč/Warâz/Bolčân (whom he now termed an Iranian mercantile clan) to convert him to Judaism.[131] In Pritsak's view, the Jewish international merchant company, the *Râḏânivya*, played an important role in the conversion. The conversion itself must be viewed within the wider context of the conversions of "Eurasian warrior steppe societies" to the monotheistic religions of the Mediterranean basin. Except for the last point, much of this remains highly conjectural. Merchants who brought religions, alphabets and other cultural artifacts along with their trading goods, certainly played a role in the movement of the monotheistic faiths of the Mediterranean basin into the Eurasian steppe. They may well have played such a role here. But, we have no direct evidence that they did so. The conversion tales preserved in Khazaro-Hebrew and Muslim sources make no mention of them.

Aleksandr Vil'jamovič Gadlo's two studies of the ethnic history of the North Caucasus from the fourth to the thirteenth century, the first of which appeared in 1979 and the second in 1994 have much to say about the Khazars, although, strictly speaking they are devoted to broader themes.[132] There are a number of new suggestions regarding various points of Khazar history and historical geography. For example, he puts forward the notion that Samandar (which is probably to be identified with Tarki) was not really a Khazar capital city, but merely the staging point for raids into Transcaucasia.[133] In overall approach, however, his work does not significantly differ from the outline of Khazar history given by Artamonov, but attempts to trace the various ethnic processes taking place in the North Caucasus during this period. This is an important theme. With regard to the Khazar state itself, he concludes that it was "a patch-work" empire which provided the basis for the subsequent economic and ethnic integration of the mountain and steppe regions.

The 1980s, following the growing pace of publications on Khazar themes, marks a period of efflorescence in Khazar studies. In 1980, the

---

[131] O. Pritsak, "The Pre-Ashenazic Jews of Eastern Europe in Relation to the Khazars, the Rus' and the Lithuanians" in H. Aster, P.J. Potichnyj (ed.), *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective* 2nd ed. (Edmonton, 1990), pp. 3–21.

[132] A.V. Gadlo, *Étničeskaja istorija Severnogo Kavkaza IV–X vv.* (Leningrad, 1979), *Étničeskaja istorija Severnogo Kavkaza X–XIII vv.* (SPb., 1994).

[133] Gadlo, *Étničeskaja istorija*, pp. 152–153.

author of these lines published his *Khazar Studies*, an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation (1970). This work was revised and essentially completed in 1972, but was delayed in publication. My remarks here will be brief and general as I must leave to others an assessment of my work. After giving an outline of Khazar history and society, I largely concentrated on the fragments of the Khazar language scattered in a variety of sources. The volume of text was accompanied by a volume of facsimiles taken from the various manuscripts in which Khazar words are found. It is clear from this data that the Khazars were Turkic and that their titulature and governmental structure closely paralleled that of the Türk Qağanate which I, like many others, view as their progenitors. The absence of texts, as opposed to scattered names, titles and toponyms, in Khazar precluded any closer identification with one or another Turkic linguistic subgrouping. While a number of scholars are convinced that their language was Oğuric or "Hunnic," as we have seen, I concluded that with the possible exception of the toponym Sarkel/*Šarkil, the linguistic material is largely neutral. Analysis is further complicated by the fact that the Khazar realm contained a variety of Turkic peoples (not to mention others), both Oğuric and those speaking Common Turkic. Sources could call "Khazar" virtually any language spoken in the region.[134] In 1983, I published an article dealing with Khazaria and Judaism which briefly took up the question of Jewish proselytizing, pointing to eras and regions in which Judaism had been more activist in this regard and suggesting that a frontier zone, such as Khazaria, was a region in which Jews could and did proselytize without fear of harsh punishment that such activity would have produced in Christian or Muslim lands. I also criticized the Artamonov-Pletnëva theory, which sought to present as established fact that the Khazar dual kingship resulted from Judaization. I showed, rather, that the institution of the dual kingship with a sacral king was a phenomenon known to many societies and had nothing to do with the adoption of monotheistic faiths of any type.[135] These themes, in particular, the Khazar dual kingship, were again addressed in a 1993 article dealing with the political authority of the Khazar rulers and an article that appeared in 2006 devoted to the Khazar sacral kingship.[136]

---

[134] Golden, *Khazar Studies*, I, pp. 112 ff. the Khazar Word-List. Some additional data is presented in my "Khazarica: Notes on Some Khazar Terms" *Turkic Languages* 9/2 (2005), pp. 205–222 which underscores some material with Oğuric Bulğaric characteristics.

[135] P.B. Golden, "Khazaria and Judaism" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, III (1983), pp. 127–156.

[136] P.B. Golden, "Gosudarstvo i gosudarstvennost' u xazar: vlast' xazarskix kaganov"

The long-awaited joint work of Norman Golb and Omeljan Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century* appeared in 1982.[137] Golb adduced further, strong evidence for the authenticity of the Khazar correspondence. He presented a revised and improved edition of the "Letter of an Anonymous Khazar Jew" (the "Schechter Letter") stemming from the Cairo Geniza. He also published a letter which he viewed as coming from the Khazar Jewish community in Kiev dating from the early tenth century that he had uncovered in the Cambridge Geniza collection in 1962. Golb demonstrated that these Khazar Jews were Rabbinical rather than Qaraite in orientation and that they had already internalized their adopted faith, creating the myth of their "return" to Judaism. He further suggested that those in the document bearing the name *Kôhên* may have been descended from Khazar shamans (*qam*s) who had adopted Judaism while retaining their priestly status in an acceptable Jewish form in a process he termed "sacerdotal metamorphosis." The document, moreover, bore the names of the signatories, a number of which were clearly non-Jewish, pointing to their probable proselytic origins. In addition, the document had an inscription in one of the runiform Turkic scripts that were widely spread across Eurasia.[138] For Khazar studies, this was an extraordinary event. Pritsak undertook the decipherment of this unique linguistic material (the runiform inscription and non-Semitic names) and concluded that the Khazars spoke an Oğuric tongue. Pritsak also put forward the theory that the toponym Kiev is to be derived from the family name of the Khazar Khwârazmian wazîrial line of the *Kûya*s and also posited a new chronology for the evolution of the Rus' state. Needless to say, a work this rich in new and often provocative ideas and conjectures brought forth a variety of critical responses.[139] The claim that the non-Hebrew names

---

in N.A. Ivanov (ed.), *Fenomen vostočnogo despotizma. Struktura upravlenija i vlasti* (Moskva, 1993), pp. 211–233. See also my "The Khazar Sacral Kingship" *Pre-Modern Russia and Its World*, ed. K. Reyerson, Th. Stavrou, J. Tracy, Schriften zur Geistesgeschichte des östlichen Europas (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), pp. 79–102.

[137] N. Golb, O. Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century* (Ithaca, 1982). A Russian translation, *Xazaro-evrejskie dokumenty X veka*, trans. V.L. Vixnovič (Moskva-Ierusalim, 1997–5757) with a brief commentary by V.Ja. Petruxin.

[138] For an evaluation of the current state of this question and the different runiform scripts of Eurasia, see D.D. Vasil'ev, "The Eurasian Areal Aspect of Old Turkic Written Culture" *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58/4 (2005), pp. 323–330.

[139] See the review article of P.B. Golden, "A New Discovery: Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, VIII/3–4 (1984), pp. 474–486. A brief overview of Russian and Ukrainian criticisms of various aspects of this work, in particular, the theory of Khazar rule in tenth-century Kiev, is given in A.A. Tortika,

were Turkic was challenged,[140] the reading of the runiform inscription was declared "arbitrary."[141] Indeed, the question of whether the letter actually originated from the Kievan Khazaro-Jewish community or was addressed to that community has been raised (see the summation of these critical comments in Erdal's contribution to this volume). Whatever the criticisms, it remains a major work in the field.

In that same year (1982), the doctoral dissertation of Dieter Ludwig appeared which focused on the social and economic structure of the Khazar state.[142] This is a meticulous study of the available literary sources (consulted in the original languages) and all of the previous literature with many new interpretations of or refinements in particular points of Khazar history, geography and social organization. Ludwig found some additional candidates for Golden's "Khazar Word-list"[143] and brought a new perspective on Khazar origins. He concluded that the Khazars are first reliably attested in the region near Khurâsân (i.e. the eastern lands of Iran) and conjectured that they were part of the Hephthalite tribal union. For some "unknown reasons" they migrated at the turn of the late fifth-early sixth century to the "Kaukasus-Vorland" where they found an already long-settled Alanic and Bulğaric population. At approximately the same time, or slightly earlier, the Sabirs had made their way to this region and were now presumably joined to the Khazar union. At first the Sabirs were the dominant element, but later the Khazars, as the result of some unspecified "crisis" took over the leadership. The collapse of the Hephthalite state, most certainly ("mit Sicherheit") before 567, brought about another westward migration of Bulğars and Khazars, the latter now appearing in Northern Daghestan. While many Khazars went further westward, a substantial grouping remained now under West Türk rule. These Türk/Khazars are the ones who formed an alliance with Heraclius, ca. 626, and warred against Iran.[144]

"'Kievskoe pis'mo' xazarskix evreev: k probleme kritiki soderžanija istočnika" *Materialy po arxeologii, istorii i étnografii Tavrii*, X (2002), pp 535–542.

[140] A.N. Torpusman, "Antroponimija i étničeskie kontakty narodov Vostočnoj Evropy v srednie veka" in M. Členov (ed.), *Imja—étnos—istorija* (Moskva, 1989), pp. 48–53. From a Turkological perspective, L. Ligeti, "The Khazarian Letter from Kiev and its Attestation in Runiform Script" *Acta Linguistica Acdemiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 31/1–4 (1981), pp. 5–18, has a number of critical comments.

[141] See I.L. Kyzlasov, *Runičeskie pis'mennosti evrazijskix stepej* (Moskva, 1994), p. 34.

[142] D. Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches im Licht der schriftlichen Quellen* (Münster, 1982).

[143] *Ibid.*, pp. 355–361.

[144] *Ibid.*, pp. 24–68.

Many (if not all) of these notices, however, are problematic and very likely anachronistic. There were, undoubtedly, Turkic nomads on the eastern and northern borders of Sâsânid Iran. Some of them, undoubtedly, were driven westward by the Sâsânid campaigns and the buffetings brought about in the steppe by the collapse of the Rouran (Jou-jan) and then Hepthalite states. Nonetheless, we have no solid evidence to connect the Khazars with the Hephthalites. Ludwig's erudite reconstruction of Khazar ethnogenesis, as many of the others, remains highly conjectural.

During the 1970s, Thomas S. Noonan (1938–2001) began to publish a number of insightful articles dealing with the economic history of Eastern Europe based on the numismatic and archaeological evidence. His interest in the flow of dirhams to Rus' inevitably led him to Khazar questions and this was reflected in a series of studies that dealt with aspects of the Khazar economy that appeared in the 1980's. Noonan always asked important questions and had new and stimulating answers. Thus, in his 1982 article on the question of a Khazar monetary economy, after an exhaustive examination of the data, he answered in the negative, despite an "initial predisposition to believe that the Khazars possessed a monetary or at least semi-monetary economy."[145] In that same year and journal, he sought to uncover the paths by which Sâsânid and Byzantine goods dating from ca. 500–650 made their way to the Middle Kama. He concluded that there were no direct relations, but rather that the Steppe peoples, in particular the early Khazars through their involvement in Heraclius' wars with the Sâsânids in Transcaucasia brought both Byzantine and Sâsânid goods to the Volga zone. From Khazaria, goods made their way northward, the Khazars using them to purchase furs.[146] Following up on this in an article on what the numismatic evidence tells us about ninth century Khazaria, Noonan, while still remaining an agnostic with regard to whether the Khazars actually minted their own coins, concluded that the bulk of Khazaria's exports came from the fur-rich lands of the North, from Volga Bulğaria and Rus' and it was thither that Arab dirhams tended to flow in the ninth and tenth centuries. If most

[145] T.S. Noonan, "Did the Khazars Possess a Monetary Economy? The Numismatic Evidence" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, II 9182), pp. 219–267.

[146] T.S. Noonan, "Russia, the Near East and the Steppe in the Early Medieval Period: An Examination of the Sasanian and Byzantine finds from the Kama-Urals Area" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, II (1982), pp. 269–302.

of the coins went there, he notes, then "historical numismatics raises some fundamental questions about Khazar commerce and the Khazar economy in the ninth century."[147] Since the time of Noonan's early publication, the evidence for Khazar coinage, or rather Khazar imitations of Arabic coins, has increased. This has occasioned a revision of Noonan's work by his student and collaborator, Roman K. Kovalev who has made important contributions in this field (see below).[148]

Khazar trade with the Islamic world, Noonan argued in a 1984 article, began only after the end of the Arab-Khazar wars. By 800, as more peaceful conditions developed, Muslim merchants made their way to Khazaria, bringing back furs, slaves and the products of the northern forests. This confirmed the shift of the Khazar capital to the now all important Volga and made the Khazar economy "increasingly dependent upon the revenues of this trade, the Khazars began to create a tributary empire in the forest steppe and forest zones…" Ultimately, this attracted the Vikings as well, leading to the founding of the Rus' state.[149] Rus' merchants, he demonstrated, in another study, were coming to Khazaria as early as the 820's.[150] Yet another study traced changes in the dirham flow (ca. 870–900) and trade patterns as Khazaria showed signs of weakening and the Pečenegs became dangerous opponents in the Pontic steppes.[151] In an important and provocative study on Khazar-Byzantine relations, Noonan argued that Byzantine attempts to use religion or trade as tools of policy to manipulate the behavior of the steppe nomads were largely unsuccessful. Rather, it was the familiar "divide and conquer" approach that proved most productive from Constantinople's viewpoint. Byzantine trade with Khazaria was "insignificant." The Khazars, he suggests,

---

[147] T.S. Noonan, "What Does Historical Numismatics Suggest About the History of Khazaria in the Ninth Century?" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, III (1983), pp. 265–281.

[148] R.K. Kovalev, "What Does Historical Numismatics Suggest About the Monetary History of Khazaria in the Ninth Century? Question Revisited" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 13 (2004), pp. 97–129. Kovalev is preparing for publication Noonan's magnum opus on the numismatics of Western Eurasia.

[149] T.S. Noonan, "Why Dirhams Reached Russia: The Role of Arab-Khazar Relations in the Development of the Earliest Islamic Trade with Eastern Europe" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, IV (1984), pp. 151–282.

[150] T.S. Noonan, "When Did Rûs/Rus' Merchants first Visit Khazaria and Baghdad? " *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, VII (1987–1991), pp. 213–219.

[151] T.S. Noonan, "Khazaria as an Intermediary Between Islam and Eastern Europe in the Second Half of the Ninth Century" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, V (1985), pp. 179–204.

viewed the Byzantines as "of secondary, and at times, peripheral importance." Those few instances of close contact (e.g. the 732/3 marital alliance or the building of Sarkel (now dated to 840–841) were largely of symbolic value and—in the case of Sarkel—ultimately of little use. By the tenth century relations had become clearly hostile.[152] A review of the numismatic and literary evidence, carried out in 1992, indicated that the hold of the Râḏâniyya on the northern route through Khazaria may well have been disrupted by the late eighth-early ninth century "and perhaps even replaced" by the Rus'-Khazar-Islamic world trade axis. By the early tenth century, there appears to have been a shift of caravan routes, with the Volga Bulğar-Sâmânid Central Asian trade coming to the fore. Volga Bulğaria now emerged "as a center potentially rivalling the Khazars." By the 940's, Noonan suggests, the Volga Bulğars were independent of Khazaria and this may well have been connected to their new prominence in trade.[153] This certainly must be taken into consideration in any discussion of the Islamization of the Volga Bulğars and the immediate causes for the fall of the Khazar state.

Most recently (1997), Noonan published an important synthesizing article in which he brought together a great deal of material pertaining to the Khazar economy, examining areas such as agriculture, viniculture and gardening, stock raising, hunting, fishing, crafts production, pottery, metal working, jewelry making, leather working etc. The written sources, he notes, have relatively little to say about Khazar pastoral nomadism which may have been preserved as a way of life largely by the elite, and much more to say about Khazar agriculture. Interestingly enough, the archaeological data does not provide much evidence for the latter than might have been expected. Nonetheless, he concludes that when viewed in toto there can be little doubt that agriculture, viniculture and related activities were well-developed in Khazaria. The data for craft production is quite considerable. Khazaria was self-sufficient with regard to ceramic ware of daily use. There was some production of weapons. Khazaria was a major market for jewelry and other luxury goods, importing some of these and producing significant quantities of their own, largely coming from the Saltovo workshops. Noonan suggests that it was Khazaria's strong, centralized government that allowed it to

[152] T.S. Noonan, "Byzantium and the Khazars: A Special Relationship ?" in J. Shepard, S. Franklin (ed.), *Byzantine Diplomacy* (Aldershot, 1992), pp. 109–132.

[153] T.S. Noonan, "Fluctuations in Islamic Trade into Eastern Europe During the Viking Age" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, XVI/3–4 (1992), pp. 237–259.

expand and incorporate non-steppe zones. This laid the foundation for the "economic diversity" that made it relatively long-lived for a steppe state. The question that remains, as Noonan notes, is: were these areas of strong agricultural and crafts production the result of the sedentarization of the nomads and their going over to these pursuits or did they result from population shifts that brought peoples with these skills to areas such as the Saltovo-Majackaja culture?[154] His final words on these important questions appear in this volume.

In 1983, yet another dissertation, that of the Daghestanian archaeologist, Murad Gadžievič Magomedov, dealt with the question of Khazar origins. Based on archaeological fieldwork done in Daghestan in the late 1960s in sites which show an interesting mix of nomadic and local cultures, he derived Khazar beginnings from the mélange of nomadic peoples that came to the North Caucasus, in particular the Sabir-Oğur groupings, the Khazar state forming under the aegis of the Western Türks with whom they mixed.[155] He, too, proclaimed it the "first feudal state formation in Eastern Europe" and noted, without further details, that it "left a deep trace on the pages of world history." He criticized Artamonov for not making sufficient use of the archaeological material to present a fuller picture of the Khazars and attacked Dunlop for "ungrounded attempts to demonstrate the Judaic origin of the Khazars."[156] This is nonsense and indicates little comprehension of what Dunlop's book is about. Moreover, Artamonov can hardly be accused of ignoring archaeological data. Similarly, comments about a Khazar return to Daghestan after the fall of the Khazar state are based on a misunderstanding of the texts (e.g. Plano Carpini).[157] What evidence is there that the Khazars did not maintain a presence in the region throughout this period? On a more positive note, he connects the Khazar urban center at Balanjar with the site of the Verxnečirjurtovskoe gorodišče on the Sulak River and provides a necessary corrective to Gumilëv's Volga-centered claims that Khazaria was a "steppe Atlantis." Daghestan was also an important territory and it has not disappeared.

---

[154] T.S. Noonan, "The Khazar Economy" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, IX (1995–1997), pp. 254–318.

[155] M.G. Magomedov, *Obrazovanie xazarskogo kaganata* (Moskva, 1983), pp. 176–177.

[156] Magomedov, *Obrazovanie*, p. 8.

[157] See Magomedov, *Obrazovanie*, p. 174, where he misinterprets the comments about the still mysterious *Brutaxi* (who may have been in the Volga region). The latters' only possible connection to the Khazars may be their Judaism, which is unattested in other sources.

On a smaller scale, but sharply focused, is the work of Vladimir Kuz'mič Mixeev who in 1985 published a book dealing with the semi-sedentarized and sedentarized Alanic, Ugric and Bulğaric population of the Don region in Khazar times (eighth-tenth century). He provides a thorough analysis of the material pertaining to agriculture in the region which was of the dry farming variety, typical of semi-nomads. Mixeev argues for the ongoing sedentarization of the nomads. Indeed, he sees nomadic statehood as developing out of the conquest of sedentary lands and the sedentarization of the nomads themselves, a policy actively pursued, he argues, by the government. The extension of Khazar power to the Don region strengthened this process. The Pečeneg invasions of the late ninth century drove some of the sedentary populations to seek the relative safety of the forest-steppe zone. Those who remained were brought into the Pečeneg union and re-nomadized. The loss of these agricultural lands contributed to the Khazar decline.[158] Mixeev raises some very interesting points which may be interpreted in different ways. Sedentarization is not always final. Formerly nomadic peoples can and do re-nomadize. Nomadic statehood is most often tied to the control over certain sedentary territories. The closer the tie with the latter, the greater the impetus to sedentarize otherwise undisciplined (from a government's perspective) populations. There is much rich comparative material pertaining to other steppe societies that the author does not take into consideration. Nonetheless, this is a valuable and thoughtful study.

One of the last of the major general works about the Khazars came from Anatolij Petrovič Novoseľcev in 1990.[159] This is a rich and nuanced work of synthesis which makes ample use of the already existing literature and is based on a first-hand acquaintance with the sources, rather than translations. It is also one with new perspectives. After a thorough historiographical review and discussion of the sources, Novoseľcev takes up the still unresolved question of Khazar origins, state formation, the contours of the state, its economy, urban life, state structure, religion and only in the last chapter touches on relations with Eastern Europe and the Rus' state. He sees a fusion of ancient Iranian elements, Ugrians and Turks, with the Sabirs playing the most important role, as forming the ethnic groupings from which the Khazars derived. He views the Sabirs as ultimately Finno-Ugrians who had become Turkicized and

[158] V.K. Mixeev, *Podon'e v sostav xazarskogo kaganata* (Xar'kov, 1985).
[159] Novoseľcev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo*, see n. 60.

were eventually brought under the sway of the Western Türks. He contends that an independent Khazar state had already come into existence by the first quarter of the seventh century, before the collapse of the Western Türk state, the Khazar ruler assuming the qağanal dignity ca. 630–650.[160] He holds to the view that there were two campaigns by Svjatoslav against Khazaria. The first in 965 in which Sarkel/Bela Veža was taken and very likely a second in 968–9,[161] sandwiched in between Svjatoslav's Danubian ventures. In both of these campaigns, he was joined by the Oğuz (in the earlier one), who attacked the Khazars from the East and by the Rus' (from the West). Svjatoslav aimed, he believes, at securing the Volga and Danubian trading routes. Khazar fragments survived and were later swept away by the Qıpčaqs.[162] Linguistically, the Khazars spoke, in his view, a form of Bulğaric.

Throughout the work, Novosel'cev adopts a critical but temperate tone. He takes frequent exception to the thesis that the Khazars "saved Eastern Europe from Islam." The Khazars, he points out, did not defeat the Arabs but were defeated in 737 and the Qağan was forced to embrace Islam. Hence, they cannot be compared to the Franks. Moreover, the Arabs, he argues, had no intention of advancing this deep beyond the Caucasus.[163] Novosel'cev is certainly correct that the Khazars were defeated in 737, but the Umayyad victory was fleeting. Marwân had been lucky in 737 and Arab forces would not again tempt the Fates here. Warfare beyond the Caucasus, into the perilous steppes, was costly and uncertain. An important part of that uncertainty was Khazar military might. True, the Khazars did not deliver a knockout blow. But, their resistance and destructive invasions of Umayyad holdings in Transcaucasia combined with the ʿAbbâsid revolution in 750 which produced new orientations in caliphal policies, brought an end to Arab advances here. Functionally, the Khazars, it may be argued, played a role very similar to that of the Franks.

Most recently (2000–2005), Sergej Alekseevič Romašov has published a long overdue historical geography of Khazaria (based on his 1992 Candidate dissertation).[164] It brings together the scattered, occasionally

---

[160] Novosel'cev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 83–91.

[161] A full argumentation for this dating has since been made by Konovalova, "Padenie Xazarii v istoričeskoj pamjati raznyx narodov" *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Vostočnoj Evropy 2001*, see above, n. 3.

[162] Novosel'cev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 219–231.

[163] Novosel'cev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo*, p. 187.

[164] S.A. Romašov, *Istoričeskaja geografija xazarskogo kaganata (V–XIII vv.)* which has

contradictory testimony of the written sources (which the author has read in the original languages) regarding the physical contours of the Khazar realm, its regions and urban centers. It also contains a useful introduction to the sources and Khazar historiography, a good outline of Khazar history and well-grounded attempts, combining the literary and archaeological data, to clarify a number of contentious issues relating to the contours of this large empire. Romašov does not consider the Rus' conquest of the 960s to have been conclusive. Rather, he argues, Khazaria became a shaken, "down-graded state" which ceased to be of interest to contemporary geographers and historians. As a consequence, there is, he argues, little data on it in this later period. Khazaria or at least elements that are identified as Khazar, in his view (and others), lived on into the era of the Mongol conquest. Khazar remnants on the basis of toponymy can be traced in Hungary, Transylvania and Bessarabia.[165]

The works of Novosel'cev and Romašov mark an elegant summation of what we can do with the Khazar problem on the basis of the written sources known to us thus far. Some of the most recent work has turned, where it inevitably must, to archaeology.

In 1989, the Hungarian archaeologist Csánad Bálint who had earlier published some archaeological addenda to Golden's *Khazar Studies*,[166] brought out a very useful survey of the archaeological material from the Western Eurasian steppes which has much to say about the Khazar-controlled lands.[167]

In 1990, Pletnëva, now the doyenne of Khazar archaeology and indeed of that of the whole of the Western Eurasian steppe, published an important and candid article on the state of Khazar archaeological studies in the former Soviet Union—to which we have already alluded. Here she summed up the hardships and achievements (quite considerable) of her colleagues and students, as well as her own work, since the time of Artamonov's early researches, in particular the extensive studies of the Saltovo-Majacki complex culture. The recent work in the Dnepr, Middle Donec, Lower Don, Crimea, Caspian—Volga, Azov zones and

---

appeared serially in *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 11 (2000–2001), pp. 219–338, 12 (2002–2003), pp. 81–221, 13 (2004), pp. 185–264, 14 (2005), pp. 107–193. See also the thesis abstract (*avtoreferat*): *Istoričeskaja geografija xazarskogo kaganata period formirovanija i rascveta (V–IX vv.)* (Moskva, 1992).

[165] Romašov, *Istoričeskaja geografija AEMAe* 14 (2005), pp. 142–154.

[166] Cs. Bálint, "Some Archaeological Addenda to Golden's Khazar Studies" *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, 35 (1981), pp. 397–412.

[167] Cs. Bálint, *Die Archäologie der Steppe* (Wien-Köln, 1989).

Daghestan are all summarized and evaluated. In virtually all areas, she reports that much material remains unpublished. Archaeological works are published only after some considerable delays and often not enthusiastically by the publishers. Although there are now several generations of scholars working on Khazar-era sites, there is some lack of scholarly communication (*naučnaja razobščënnost'*), a preoccupation with methodological questions on the part of some and too much timidity in adopting new methodologies on the part of others, an unwillingness to draw broad conclusions, and a retreat to simple, descriptive rather than broadly analytical works. The same criticism, we should note, may be levelled at other disciplines as well and are hardly unique to Russia. There are also some interesting findings in her summation. She notes, among other things, that it now appears that the Khazars were the most nomadic part of the population of Khazaria. They were also richer and most probably higher up in the socio-political hierarchy. Pletnëva also cautiously suggests that the vanished Itil may have been covered over by some present-day large city (perhaps Volgograd/Carycin). Itil has yet to be found.

Among Pletnëva's most recent works we may note her masterful summation of the Sarkel material showing that in the years after its construction, it was not only a fort but also became an important link in Khazar commerce. It was part of the famous "Silk Route." After its conquest by the Rus' in 965, Sarkel eventually resumed its role as a trade city.[168] Further work along these lines is now being published by Roman K. Kovalev demonstrating the integration of this zone into the Silk Road.[169] In 1999, Pletnëva published what we may consider her *magnum opus* in the field of Khazar studies. The "Sketches of Khazar Archaeology"[170] is a detailed overview of the work of Russian and Soviet archaeologists on Khazarian finds. It devotes much attention to materials from lands under Khazar control, but has only one chapter dealing with the Khazar core territories (North Caucasian-Volgo-Caspian steppes). In her opening remarks Pletnëva cautions that "this work is not actually about the Khazars and it is not about the culture created by them." In fact,

---

[168] S.A. Pletnëva, *Sarkel i "šëlkovyj put"* (Voronež, 1996).

[169] See his lengthy review of her book in *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 10 (1998–1999), pp. 245–254 and his "Commerce and Caravan Routes Along the Northern Silk Road (Sixth-Ninth Centuries). Part I: The Western Sector" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 14 (2005), pp. 55–105.

[170] See n. 80.

the identification of actual Khazar sites, she notes, is still problematic and open to question. In her concluding remarks she writes that she has attempted to "present the at times very sparse, and hence debatable (*spornye*), archaeological facts which bear witness to the existence of the Khazar kaganate." All that can be done, at this stage, is to discuss the cultures of the various ethnic groups (especially the Alans and the Bulğaro-Oğuric Turks) that constituted the Khazar realm. As a consequence, the principal focus of the study is the Saltovo-Majaki culture and its expansion within Khazar-dominated lands. The variety of the cultures associated with these different groupings, however, "gives some grounds for doubt regarding the existence of a unitary state culture and hence of the existence of the state itself under whose auspices it developed."[171] Pletnëva here seems to be almost denying the existence of the Khazar polity as a state. In her conclusion, however, Pletnëva avers that the "unity of the culture of everyday life in all the areas of the early and developed periods of the life of the kaganate can be considered proven." This unity was premised, she adds, on the political unity achieved by the Khazar state. Also demonstrated, in her view, is the basically sedentary nature of the population of the Khazar state whose economy was largely agricultural—although in some regions seasonal nomadism was still practiced.[172] With regard to the Khazar spiritual world, she remarks that funerary practices throughout Khazaria display "profound pagan concepts which penetrated the whole of Khazar society regardless of the ethnic affiliations of the population carrying out the burial (or) the place of their residence, i.e. in the central districts or on the furthest frontier regions of this vast state." Pletnëva's "Sketches" are rich in descriptive detail, providing full accounts of the various investigated archaeological complexes, but offers generalizations that would be of immediate use to the historian only in her concluding remarks. In part, this caution is no doubt due to the fact that Khazar archaeological studies are still, in effect, a work in progress.

Many sites, including those in the core Khazar territory, have not yet been fully studied. Of those that have been examined, not all the studies have been published.[173] This is, of course, a great pity, for it is in the core Khazar lands that answers may, perhaps, be found for some of the fun-

[171] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, pp. 3–5, 207.
[172] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, p. 207.
[173] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, pp. 205, 209–210.

damental questions scholarship still has regarding the Khazars. Among the most interesting prospects is the work being carried out in the Lower Volga delta, near the village of Samosdelka in Astrakhan' *oblast'*. But the conditions of research are difficult and, as Pletnëva notes, Itil remains elusive.[174]

The study of the spiritual world of the peoples of Khazaria, touched on above, is also still very much in its infancy. In 1995, Richard A.E. Mason published an article in which he attempted to reconstruct the Khazar religious system, largely on the basis of the written sources.[175] Although he does not go much beyond much of the previously published work, the latter was often presented in an unsystematic fashion, while dealing with other issues. Mason has focused exclusively on this important topic and has tried to place it in the Türk and larger Eurasian context. Following Pritsak in many areas, he drew parallels with Indo-European practices and beliefs. He further suggested that the mix of peoples in Khazaria contributed to "a blossoming of both material and spiritual culture among the Khazars. It has also formed the basis for the remarkable symbiosis of varying systems of religious belief and practice which held sway and formed so unique a characteristic of the Khazar state…"[176] We have no clear idea as to whether there was, indeed, a blossoming of "spiritual culture" in Khazaria. However, it seems more than likely that various types of religious symbiosis and syncretism took place. Much more data is still needed.

A new area has been opened with the book of Valentina Evgen'evna Flërova, a specialist on the graffiti and other scattered marks, drawings and carvings on objects stemming from Khazaria and the Bulğar lands. These pose very considerable problems of analysis. They do not appear to be alphabetic writing. Some are almost certainly *tamğa*s of various types. Others may have had religious-magical significance and Flërova believes that from them the spiritual world of the Saltovo-Majackaja culture can be reconstructed.[177] Pletnëva, building on this, and on the traces of the spiritual culture of the peoples of Khazaria (depictions of men dancing naked, wearing masks and carrying spears, the use of a

[174] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, pp. 191–194.
[175] R.A.E. Mason, "The Religious Beliefs of the Khazars" *Ukrainian Quarterly*, LX/4 (Winter, 1995), pp. 383–415.
[176] *Ibid.*, p. 387.
[177] V.E. Flërova, *Graffiti Xazarii* (Moskva, 1997).

variety of talismans, worship of oak trees, totemism etc.) underscores the paramountcy of paganism within the Qağanate.[178]

Related to the studies of Flërova is the work of Igor' Leonidovič Kyzlasov on the runic script systems of the Eurasian steppes. In his survey of this very complicated material, he devotes some attention to the runiform scripts found on Khazar territory. We have previously noted his views on the runic inscription on the Kiev letter. He also points out that the script systems dating to the late eighth-tenth century from the Don-Kuban region show the greatest similarities with the South Yenisei scripts. From this he posits a Don-Kuban-South Yenisei script complex. The differences between this complex and the Orxon-Yenisei-Talas are too great to be explained by orthographic changes as the script moved from one group to another. [179] This is really one of the new frontiers for Khazar studies. Pletnëva, who touches on this question in her "Sketches," shows no hesitation in identifying the Don script with Khazar and the Kuban script with Bulğaro-Oğuric.[180] The case has yet to be made.

So, where do we stand? What do we know that is not based on speculation, preconceived notions or wishful thinking? Some major questions remain. First and foremost is the still not fully answered question of Khazar origins.

The Question of Khazar Origins

A number of hypotheses regarding the origins of the Khazars have been put forward:

1) They derive from the Ἀκάτζιροι or Ἀκάτιροι/*Acatziri*/*Agaziri* a fifth century Hunnic people mentioned by Priscus, Jordanes and the Ravenna Anonymous,[181] presumably a rendering of the name **Aq Qazar* (there are considerable philological problems here).

---

[178] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, pp. 211–214.
[179] Kyzlasov, *Runičeskie pis'mennosti*, pp. 42, 65–78.
[180] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, p. 218.
[181] See W.B. Henning, "A Farewell to the Khagan of the Aq-Aqatärân" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XIV (1952), pp. 501–522; Gadlo, *Étničeskaja istorija Severnogo Kavkaza IV–X vv.*, pp. 59–66; Pritsak, "The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion" *HUS*, 2 (1978), pp. 261–263, but allowing for a Türk component. For the forms, see Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*[2], II, pp. 58–59.

2) They originated from a tribal union formed of Oğuric tribes, the Sabirs and Türks, with the ruling strata deriving from the Western Türk state,[182] in some way analogous to the position of the Činggisid ruling elements in the Golden Horde.
3) They were of Sabir origin and are Turkicized Ugrians.[183]
4) They are of Uyğur origin (= the Qasars)[184]
5) They stem from Hephthalites who migrated to the Caucasus (late fifth-early sixth century) where they formed a union with the Sabirs and other nomads.[185]

I am most favorably inclined toward the Oğur-Sabir-Türk theory, which, I think, best accounts for the ethnic data we have. The fact that the Chinese sources so often join Tujue (Türk) and Kesa (Khazar)[186] is hardly accidental. The identity of the Türk qağanal and Khazar qağanal investiture ceremonies, reported by two completely different historiographical traditions (Chinese and Arabic) with no chance of contamination also argues strongly for the Ashina origins of the Khazar ruling house. These practices, in particular the ritual strangulation of the would-be Qağan, would hardly have eluded the attention of our sources had they been the norm practiced by other Turkic steppe peoples. Although a prohibition (not always followed) on the shedding of the ruler's blood in the Turkic world was fairly widespread (and hence strangulation was an acceptable means of getting rid of rival royal claimants et al.),[187] we only have evidence for its practice in investiture ceremonies with the Ashina Türks and the Khazars. Nonetheless, the various hypotheses remain highly conjectural with little hard data to fully support them.

---

[182] Németh, *HMK*[1], p. 204, *HMK*[2], pp. 162–163; Czeglédy, "Age of Migrations," *AEMAe*, III (1983), pp. 104–106; Golden, *Khazar Studies*, I, p. 53.

[183] Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, pp. 43, 68, 76, 78, 115, 127, followed by Novoseľcev and others.

[184] Dunlop, *History*, pp. 34–40. The possibility of such a connection is not excluded—albeit with many caveats—by Róna-Tas, *A honfoglaló magyar nép*, pp. 189–192, Eng. *Hungarians and Europe*, pp. 228–230. Róna-Tas views the *Ksr* [*Kasar, *Kasir?], noted (ca. 555) in an appendix to the *Ecclesiastical History* of Zacharias Rhetor in his listing of nomadic peoples north of the Caucasus, as the Khazars. He places the "first prominent historical appearance" of the Khazars "at around 620."

[185] Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches*, pp. 24 ff.

[186] See S. Shirota, "The Chinese Chroniclers of the Khazars: Notes on Khazaria in Tang Period Texts" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 14 (2005), pp. 231–261.

[187] See M.F. Köprülü, "Türk ve Moğol Sülâlelerinde Hânedân Âzâsının İdamında Kan Dökme Memnnuiyeti" *Türk Hukuk Tarihi Dergisi Dergisi* I (1938), pp. 1–9; M. Akman, *Osmanlı Devletinde Kardeş Katli* (Istanbul, 1997).

The earliest appearance of the Khazars, which is an important element of this question also remains highly problematic. As often happened in medieval historical writing, the names of powerful peoples were transferred back in the past to kindred groupings or even to alien groupings that resembled them in life-style etc. Thus, Byzantine historians regularly referred to the Eurasian nomads as "Scythians." There are a number of notices placing the Khazars in the region before the mid-sixth century, but these are most probably anachronistic. Both Dunlop and Artamonov concluded that they were certainly "on the scene" by the reign of Ḫusraw Anûšîrvân (531–579).[188] Czeglédy, however, felt reasonably certain that the "Qasars and Barsils" came to the Caspian-Pontic steppe zone together with other Oğuric peoples ca. 463 (cf. the notice in the appendix to Zacharias Rhetor which mentions the كصغ *K(a)s(i)r* ca. 555—although this could just as easily be a garbling of Akatzir etc.[189]—the relationship of which to the ethnonym *Khazar* has never been demonstrated) and then together with Oğuric groups and the Sabirs (who arrived ca. 506) came under Türk overlordship in 567. Then, according to this view, the Türk form of their name, *Xazar* spread and became known.[190]

I am less certain. Indeed, one might argue that before they are mentioned as the allies of Heraclius in his campaigns in Transcaucasia against the Sâsânids, there is little that can be said about them. Even in that context, the Byzantine and Armenian sources may be using the name anachronistically. Might not the name *Qazar* have come into being with their emancipation or break away from the Western Türk Empire, sometime between 630–650? Was it not perhaps at first a descriptive or social term, akin to *Qazaq*, which later became an ethnonym? What role did the struggle with the Arabian Caliphate play in promoting Khazar statehood in a region in which nomadic statelessness was the norm? The discovery of texts that could be unambiguously attributed to the Khazars would certainly help to resolve the problem of Khazar origins. As we have seen, the Khazar words (names, titles and place names) scattered in our sources are largely neutral, only pointing to their undoubted Turkic character, but not telling us where they belonged in the taxonymy of the

[188] Dunlop, *History*, pp. 20–22; Artamonov, *Istorija xazar*, pp. 116–117.
[189] Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge*, pp. 355–356; Dunlop, *History*, p. 7.
[190] Czeglédy, "Age of Migrations," *AEMAe*, III (1983), pp. 103–106.

Turkic linguistic world. The few recent papers which deal with this issue have analyzed individual terms[191]—useful and important, but the big question remains open.

A major and much debated theme has been the question of Khazar influences on the development of Rus', in particular, the question of the Rus' Qağanate and the origins of the Rus' system of succession. We do not have time to discuss this significant question in detail—although it is illustrative of a possibly very important Khazar impact on Rus' political development.[192] Pritsak, in particular, has put forward Khazar origins for a number of aspects of the Rus' political structure.[193] Recently, he attempted to connect some elements of the Rus' weights and metric system to the Khazars, concluding also that the Khazars did indeed have their own coinage.[194] As usual, the evidence is thin and there is no agreement on these issues.

The question of the role of the Khazars in the shaping of Eastern European Jewry seems to encounter polemics at every stage. Bernard Weinryb, in 1962, rather airily dismissed "most of the theories and hypotheses concerning the beginnings of east-European Jewry as no more than fiction."[195] Popular works, such as Arthur Koestler's *The Thirteenth Tribe* have only added to the controversy. Salo Baron, who incorrectly viewed them as Finno-Ugrians, believed that the Khazars "sent many offshoots into the unsubdued Slavonic lands, helping ultimately to build up the great Jewish centers of eastern Europe" and concluded that

---

[191] M. Erdal, "Ein unbemerkter chasarischer Eigenname" *Türk Dilleri Ara≈stırmaları 1991*, pp. 31–36; S.G. Klyashtorny, "About One Khazar Title in Ibn Faḍlân" *Manuscripta Orientalia* 3/3 (Nov., 1997), pp. 22–23; P.B. Golden, "Khazarica" *Turkic Languages* 9/2 (2005), pp. 205–222

[192] On this question see A.P. Novosel'cev, "K voprosu ob odnom iz drevnejšix titulov russkogo knjazja" *Istorija SSSR*, No. 4 (1982), pp. 150–159 and P.B. Golden, "The Question of the Rus' Qağanate" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, II (1982), pp. 77–97; O. Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus'*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), I, pp. 26–28,182,583 and Golb and Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*, pp. 64–65.

[193] Pritsak, "The System of Government under Volodimir the Great" *HUS*, XIX (1995), pp. 572–593.

[194] O. Pritsak, *The Origins of the Old Rus' Weights and Monetary Systems* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), esp. pp. 22–32.

[195] B. Weinryb, "The Beginnings of East European Jewry in Legend and Historiography" in M. Ben-Horin et al. (eds.), *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman* (Leiden, 1962), pp. 445–502. Some of the recent literature and current controversies are discussed in Pritsak, "The Pre-Ashenazic Jews of Eastern Europe" in Aster, Potichnyj (eds.), *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, pp. 3–21; L.S. Chekin, "The Role of Jews in Early Russian Civilization in the Light of a New Discovery and New Controversies" *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 17 No. 4 (Winter, 1990), pp. 379–394.

"this noteworthy experiment in Jewish statecraft doubtless exerted a greater influence on Jewish history than we are as yet able to envisage."[196] Paul Wexler's controversial study of the Ashkenazi Jews declared the latter a people of Khazar and Western Slavic origins.[197] Methodologically, Wexler has opened up some new areas, taking elements of folk culture into account. I think that his conclusions have gone well beyond the evidence. Nonetheless, these are themes that should be pursued further.

The dating of the Khazar conversion to Judaism was unclear and much disputed for a long time. Depending on which text one cares to privilege, the dates have ranged from ca. 740 to ca. 861.[198] We now have firmer ground on which to stand. Al-Masʿûdî placed the conversion to the reign of the caliph Hârûn al-Rašîd (786–809).[199] In 837/838, the Khazars issued imitation ʿAbbâsid dirhams which contain the customary Muslim formula, but with a significant change: "There is no God, but God and Moses is his Messenger."[200] Clearly, the dominant strata of Khazaria were Judaic by that time. While I am convinced by the work of Zvi Ankori and Norman Golb that the Khazars were adherents of Rabbinical Judaism, the question of Eastern European Qaraite origins, so often tied to the Khazars, requires still further investigation. The Qaraim of Eastern Europe are an example of an interesting symbiosis between a Jewish people and the Turkic world, more specifically the Cuman-Qıpčaq population of Medieval Crimea.

We know little of the inner life of the Khazars, having only tantalizing hints about clan and tribal structure, class relations, gender relations etc. There are still arguments over the weight of nomadic to sedentary population within Khazaria. There remain difficulties in identifying, archaeologically, the various populations of the Qağanate. In the absence of

---

[196] S.W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1937–1983), III, pp. 204–206.

[197] P. Wexler, *The Ashkenazic Jews: A Slavo-Turkic People in Search of a Jewish Identity* (Columbus, Ohio, 1993).

[198] For the latter dating see most recently C. Zuckerman, "On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Rus' Oleg and Igor" *Revnue des Études Byzantines*, 53 (1995), pp. 237–270.

[199] Al-Masʿûdî, *Murûj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 212.

[200] R.K. Kovalev, "What Does Historical Numismatics Suggest About the Monetary History of Khazaria in the Ninth Century?—Question Revisited" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 13 (2003), pp. 106–114 and his "Creating Khazar Identity through Coins: The Special Issue Dirham of 837/8" in F. Curta (ed.), *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, 2005), pp. 220–253.

written materials we can make only general statements about the Turkicness of their language, a crucial marker of identity.

Nonetheless, a lot has been achieved. Parts of the jigsaw puzzle are coming into clearer focus. What remains to be done? The creation of a full corpus of all texts pertaining to the Khazars is certainly one of the most important desiderata. New editions of key texts, for example the *Derbend-Nâme* along with the other North Caucasian chronicles, in their original languages accompanied by translations, would be useful.[201] The Chinese sources have only recently been introduced in a serious way. There are a number of scattered references to the Khazars, in part in connection with Khwârazm, which had direct relations with the Tang.[202] The references include reports on Khazar food and drink. Obviously, the publication of the archaeological data is one of the most important tasks along with new expeditions to Khazar sites. The Khazars remain elusive, sometimes enigmatic. With more than a century of research done, there still remains much to do.

[201] The work of A.R. Šixsaidov is a very useful step in this direction, cf. his "Dagestanaskaja istoričeskaja xronika 'Tarix Dagestan' Muxammada Rafi (k voprosu ob izučenii)" *Pis'mennye pamjatniki Vostoka, 1972* (Moskva, 1972); "Dagestanskie istoričeskie sočinenija" *Istočnikovedenie i tekstologija srednevekovogo Bližnego i Srednego Vostoka* (Moskva, 1984) and most recently A.R. Šixsaidov, T.M. Ajtberov, G.M.-R. Orazaev, *Dagestanskie istoričeskie sočinenija* (Moskva, 1993).

[202] In addition to the work of Shun Shirota noted above, see Lin Yang, "Some Chinese Sources on the Khazars and Khwarazm" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 11 (2000–2001), pp. 339–364.

THE ALANS: NEIGHBOURS OF THE KHAZARS IN THE CAUCASUS

Irina A. Arzhantseva

The Alans invariably occupy a key position in the complex, turbulent and sometimes obscure relations between the Khazars and their numerous neighbours, not to mention many of the Khazar's political ventures. As the Alans held, geographically, a strategically important position in the North Caucasus (fig. 1), which was the major cross-roads of Eurasian trading and military routes, they were, from the moment that they united into a coherent political group, constantly drawn into the orbit of the complicated relationships of the super-powers, whose interests clashed in the North Caucasus.

In the sixth-seventh centuries these powers were Iran and Byzantium, who fought for control over the caravan routes that ran across the North Caucasus through territory occupied by the Alans. From the middle of the seventh century the Alans found themselves in the sphere of interest of a new political entity, the Khazar Khaganate (Gadlo, 1979, pp. 74–78, Kuznetsov, 1992, pp. 154, 155). By the middle of the eighth century, the Alans were now virtually under Khazar rule (Artamonov, 1962, c. 360; Kokovtsov, 1932, c. 101–102) and they go almost unmentioned in Byzantine sources of the eighth and ninth centuries (Kuznetsov, 1992, c. 155; Kulakovskyi, 1899, c. 49, 50). It is difficult to state with any clarity what sort of subordination the Alans endured from the Khazars. The Alans were the force by virtue of which the Khazars emerged victorious from the difficult struggle for overall control in the North Caucasus. "The Alan union, even after this, remained intact as a coherent political entity with its ruler, even though its actual role was ambiguous and sometimes inconstant . . . the Alans always appear to be a separately defined political entity who are at times allies of the Khazars and at times closer to Byzantium or, very rarely indeed, to the Caliphate" (Novosel'tsev, 1990, p. 105).

Written sources indicate that, quite apart from help as allies and military support, the Alans paid tribute to the Khazars (Kokovtsov, 1932, c. 101–102, 105). Some experts, however, point out, and rightly so, that

the Alans' core territory was unlikely to have formed a part of the Khazar state itself. We find more convincing the arguments put forward by those Caucasologists, such as Kuznetsov and Zeteishvili (Zeteishvili, 1976, c. 85, Kuznetsov, 1992, c. 155), who hold the view that the eastern Alans inhabiting the area around the Darial pass were most dependent on the Khazars, while the western Alans inhabiting the upper Kuban valley retained a greater measure of independence and were traditionally more pro-Byzantine in their policies (fig. 1).

We archaeologists however focus our attention on the microzone which is situated in the region bordering on Khazaria but which gravitated towards Western Alania. This is the south-west border of the Khazar Khaganate. It is a region which has at all times had extraordinary attractions for a number of different tribes and which is rich in archaeological monuments stretching over a number of periods. This region is today that of Caucasian Mineral Waters, or, geographically, the Kislovodsk basin (fig. 2). It is very likely that in the seventh to ninth centuries this region did not form an immediate part of the Khazar Khaganate (Kuznetsov, 1992, c. 153, Mamaev, 1974). Yet it was here that a very intensive infiltration of Turkic elements took place into an Alan zone in the early mediaeval period (Abaev, 1949, c. 257). These Turkic elements were very likely Kuban Bulgars who were subject to the Khazars (Kovalevskaya, 1984, c. 172).

If we are to understand properly the nature of the tributaries and sovereign relationships involved, we must do so not only by interpreting the subjective and unreliable data to be found in written sources. We have to have a good idea of the structure and organisation of life among the Alans at this period.

For the last few years our team, in conjunction with a group of soil-scientists and geologists, has been tackling the problem of the historical and palaeo-landscape conditions for the emergence and evolution of Alan settlements, their structure, typology and chronology. We are also concerned with questions of the formation and evolution of soils of terraced slopes and ancient settlements, with a consequent construction of a regional spatial and temporal model for the development of climate, of soils and ancient systems of agriculture and communications (Arzhantseva, Turova, Bronnikova, Zazovskaya, 2001, pp. 115–124). Our work was directed at the following goals: 1) a proper archaeological investigation of the monuments; 2) the creation of large-scale topographical plans of the key-monuments; 3) landscape and soil research; 4) engineering and geological research on the monuments and the adjacent territory.

From the point of view of solving these problems we found that the most interesting microregion was that of the Caucasian Mineral Waters or the Kislovodsk basin. Here the density of population from the fifth to sixth centuries rose rapidly because of an influx of Tanais Alans, who were attacked by the Huns, after they forced the Volga, in 372 A.D. (Ammianus Marcellinus, 1949, 305), or because of migration of other Alan tribes from neighbouring territories (perhaps from the Terek-river region or from Kabarda, cf the well reasoned hypothesis of the archaeologist Vladimir Malashev).[1] The shift in their habitual habitation zones and the new natural conditions forced the Alans to alter the system of their economy and they had to change from a purely cattle-breeding economy to another one, a combination of agriculture and cattle-breeding. Archaeologically, these processes are represented by a number of Alan sites in the foothill plains (sometimes the cultural accretions stretch from the 1st century A.D. to the period preceding the Mongol conquests).

Before we speak of the Alan settlements and the palaeo-landscape situation in this region, the historical context requires a few words. This is the time in which the consolidation of the Western Alans took place. For a number of years (from 558 to 572 A.D.) Byzantine sources mention a "king" or "ruler" of the Western Alans, Sarozius, who had a consistent policy of alliance with Byzantium (Menander, 1860, 374–384). Basing ourselves on these sources we can imagine the territory subject to the rule of Sarozius: this would be the Upper Kuban, the Pyatigor'e region and present-day Balkaria i.e. the Kislovodsk basin was part of this zone (Kovalevskaya, 1984, c. 134). Here, however, were the routes over passes beyond the control of Iran, the permanent rival of Byzantium. Correspondingly, it was here that the basic interests of Byzantium, which was subsequently to be, together with the Alans, an ally of the Khazars against the Arabs, were concentrated. The control and defence of these passes by the Alans was the key element in their union with the Byzantines and also with the Khazars. Sarozius was well acquainted with the most important political and diplomatic events then taking place in the Caucasus, and rulers of other tribes turned to him as a mediator if they wished to obtain support from Byzantium.

---

[1] For more detail about this hypothesis see: Malashev V. "Keramika iz pogreval'nykh kompleksov mogil'nikov Klin Yar III i IV" (forthcoming).

Carrying out such a determined and firm external policy was possible only by relying on a solid rear-ground. Here too it is natural to suppose that the sharp increase in the population numbers and the appearance at the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh centuries of a series of settlements with a system of "strictly ordered organisation of defence" (Iessen, 1941, c. 24–25) in all the mountain valleys leading to the paths over the passes must be linked to the activity of the same Sarozius.

The most densely settled areas (or to be precise, the best researched) have turned out to be the tributaries of the Podkumok (the rivers Alikonovka, Ber'ozovaia and others) near Kislovodsk. Here, at the end of the sixth or at the very beginning of the seventh century, there arose a network of fortified settlements (Korobov, 2001, pp. 133–135), which lasted until the ninth-tenth centuries, i.e. virtually for the entire life of the Khazar Khaganate. These fortresses are striking by their homogeneity. The fortresses were set up every 2 or 3 kilometres at the furthest point of an outcrop that dominated a river (the height of the outcrop was between 5 and 10 metres) on convenient cattle-driving paths. Sometimes in a relatively small space a whole nest of such fortresses was built and these controlled the routes not only to the passes but also to the best Alpine pastures (fig. 2).

The fortress walls, towers, habitation and economic structures were made of large blocks of grey limestone which was quarried, as a rule, on the low rock on which the outcrop stood thus turning it into an impregnable citadel: the fortress walls were from 4 to 6 metres wide and, apparently about 6 to 8 metres high, with flanking and gate towers on a vertical two-metre monolith rock base. The lower part had steep, inaccessible slopes. The gates were in the lower part and they led to a flight of steps carved out of the rock, leading to the citadel. Theophylactus Simocatta (Simocattes) describes absolutely identical fortresses in the episode about the capture by the Byzantine of one fortress in spring 583 A.D. (Feofilakt Simokatta, 1957, c. 4).

Typically, the Alan settlements in the foothills and mountains of the Central Caucasus have a grouped systematic distribution, there is a visual link between the settlements, they are of small size and they use naturally fortified outcrops and rocks (some of them were inhabited even in late Sarmatian times). Along the Alikonovka river, from Kislovodsk lake to the upper reaches, over some twelve kilometres fourteen fortresses have been found, all of them within signalling distance from each other (fig. 2). No sooner would an enemy appear than the bad news would be signalled through the valley: cattle had to be driven off

and hidden in the mountains, supplies had to be tucked away and men prepared for battle. An enemy might lay siege to a fortress and cut it off from its water supply, but to judge by our most recent data, there are water-bearing layers in many of these rock outcrops and the fortresses were sited next to a mountain spring which clearly served as a source of water at critical moments. It is most likely that the population of these neighbouring fortresses were linked by social relationships. They appear to have taken part in campaigns together and are very likely to have used common pastures and hunting areas et cetera. Consequently, the organisation for defending these fortresses must also have been shared. The constructional peculiarities of the sites are due, first and foremost, to the geomorphology of the Northern Caucasus and clearly to the time they were built, rather than to any historical and cultural or ethnic particulars of the population that left them (Kovalevskaya, 1984, c. 146, Arzhantseva, 2001, p. 48).

It is possible to trace definite changes which took place in the life of the population. If at the end of the sixth and in the seventh centuries small fortresses, homogeneous in their plan and layout, comprised a single defensive system which stretched from the foothills to the pass routes over the Great Caucasus, (Arzhantseva I., 1997, pp. 153–161) then in the eighth and ninth centuries certain fortresses show distinct signs of having being captured by nomadic Turkic peoples. These Turkic elements were very likely Kuban Bulgars who were subject to the Khazars (Kovalevskaya, 1984, c. 148–149; Fedorov Ya.A., Fedorov G.S., 1978, 83–84, Arzhantseva, 2002, p. 442).

As a standard monument for archaeological work we selected the settlement Gornoe Ekho and for palaeo-landscape research the Alikonovka river valley in its entirety. The structure of the monument is very typical for small Alan fortresses as we have described them. The outcrop on which the monument stands consists of two layers (fig. 3). The majority of structures are situated on the horizontal surface of the upper layer (fig. 4). The area of the upper tier is less than that of the lower. On three sides, the outcrop is bounded by the river Alikonovka valley and the Lunacharsky stream. Unfortunately, at various times stone has been extracted from the monument for the needs of local construction and this has led to a process in which enormous cracks have formed and the process of destruction has been accelerated. But, on the whole, the monument is in a fairly good, stable condition. At the present time we have virtually completed a large-scale topographical plan (1:500) and have marked on it the remains of structures visible on the surface (fig. 5).

The plan shows about 40 objects and overall it is now possible to have an idea of the monument's structure. The largest object on the site is object 1, which occupies an area of about 600 square metres. This would appear to be the key structure in the site's fortification system. It may well have been a fort wall with towers and contre-forces. The object has been built at the narrowest place in the site and straddles it from one edge to the other. This construction is very similar to what was described by Procopius of Caesaria.[2] Only a little part of this object was uncovered after 3 years of investigations. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that this wall is of a very complicated structure. Very likely, this object consisted of two parallel double-faced walls with a space between it divided into special separated rooms and chambers. Some of these chambers were filled with stone debris (fig. 6). Thus, the wall that we suppose to have stood there separated the greater northern part of the site on which most of the structures stood from the southern part. In the southern part there are virtually no structures which can be interpreted as habitations. It may well be that cattle were rounded up here at dangerous moments. Even though not a very big area of habitation deposit has been uncovered, one is struck by the intensity of life: there are many animal bones, especially on the areas by the walls; there is a lot of burnt daub—*turluk*, charcoal, fragments of ceramics. Over large areas we can find traces of fire and destruction which can be dated to the middle or end of the eighth century (Arzhantseva, 2006, p. 132, fig. 14). Striking too is the characteristic destruction of the walling, with dilapidation occurring in one direction and several irregular cracks of virgin rock outcrop among the building's remains (fig. 7). This suggests that even during the life of the town there were earthquakes. This too would explain the disordered heaps of large lumps of limestone lying at the edge of the plateau, at quite a distance from the nearest structures, too far to explain their position as the result of the ordinary disintegration of the walls. The date of the monument can, on the evidence of the ceramics, be put somewhere in the sixth to eighth centuries. There is no doubt now that the fortress was still operational in the ninth-tenth centuries (fig. 8).

In reconstructing the system of mountain agriculture of Alan settlements in the North Caucasus in the first millennium and the beginning of the second, we must ask how such a large population supplied its needs and how their economy was organised? What resources did the Alans have from which to pay tribute to the Khazars? At the same time,

[2] See his account in "The Gothic Wars" VIII, 8, 37.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus intrigues us by his speculation that Alania had two ways of exerting pressure on the Khaganate, first and foremost by interrupting the supply to Khazaria of 'the means of subsistence' since nine Khazar provinces ("climates") have common borders with Alania and from these areas Khazaria receives "all its supplies" (Constantine Porphyrogenitus, 1989, c. 52, 53). There is every reason to suppose that the Caucasian Mineral Waters region supplied Khazaria with agricultural produce.

In studying systems of supplying the necessities of life, the question to which the least attention is paid is that of the organisation of agricultural production in the conditions of mountain regions.[3] The data from excavating the site testifies to a high level of agricultural production, for on its territory we find a large number of grain stores, grindstones and so on—undoubted signs that the population undertook agricultural work.Research into the territory along the river Alikonovka valley of the Kislovodsk basin has shown that the mountain slopes have everywhere been turned into agricultural terrains by human hand, turning them into a system of stepped terraces (from 1 to 7 on one slope). Our work proved beyond doubt that these terraces are of artificial origin. The construction of the terraces was done by cutting an even or slightly curving stepped ledge (10 to 30 metres wide and 200 to 300 metres long) into the slope. The soil for the building of the terrace was either brought from another slope or was cut out of the upper part of the slope and placed as a step lower down the slope (Arzhantseva, Turova, Bronnikova, Zazovskaya, 2001, fig. 14.1, 14.2b).

The terraced agricultural terrains of the Alan sites differ in their structure. Thus we find terraces fortified by stones at the longer edge (probably to retain water), terraces which are not continuous, drawn out along northern slopes, and continuous terraces which go right around the whole of a raised point. Clearly, the difference in constructions is linked to a varying level of agricultural knowledge by the indigenous and the assimilated tribes who had settled this region. With a high degree of probability we may thus conjecture that there was not only a stable productive system of agriculture but that it evolved progressively over the historical period under study.

---

[3] All soil and palaeo-landscape studies were carried out and are still being carried out by a group of specialists from Moscow State University, Pedology Faculty (Dr. Sergey Sedov) and from the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Dr. Maria Bronnikova, Dr. Marina Skripnikova, Irina Turova).

Special emphasis should be given to the stabilising, ecologically conservative role of terraces in today's very unstable landscape conditions in the Northern Caucasus foothills. Terraced slopes are less liable to suffer from erosion and landslide than their natural analogues.

We were also faced with the task of reconstructing the palaeo-landscape by palaeo-soil and palaeo-botanical methods.

Basic soil-science conclusions: by comparing the burial soils under the surface soils of the terraces, under barrows of Scythian times to modern soil surfaces,[4] we can conclude that in the second half of the Holocene (7000 years), the climate remained more or less stable. A slight tendency was observed towards increased moisture, but on the whole the climate was favourable to steppe ecosystems. This means that in the Caucasian Mineral Waters region the formation and functioning of ethno-cultures for the last two thousand years took place in conditions when grassy vegetative associations predominated, with forests only along the river valleys. This situation differs radically from the landscape dynamics in the western foothills of the Caucasus (the upper reaches of the Kuban, Zelenchuk, Marukha rivers and westwards to the Black Sea), where in the late Holocene there was a sharp change of climate and the steppe ecosystems which had earlier predominated gave way to forests. This means that in the Caucasian Mineral Waters region the conditions for cattle-raising were always favourable, unlike more westerly regions. Hence, this very area attracted nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes by its mostly animal-husbandry-based economy for nearly a millennium, up to the late 8th century A.D.

Given relatively stable climatic conditions, in the valleys we note traces of catastrophic phenomena. An analysis of the depth of slope deposits has shown a rhythmic structure: horizontal layers of well developed burial soils alternate with coarse stony slope accretions which stem from landslides or earth movement, unaffected by soil formation (Arzhantseva, 2006, p. 131). This means that periods of stabilisation of slope surfaces and of the development of soil formations alternated with phases of abrupt activation of slope processes. These phenomena may have been caused by tectonic phenomena of a catastrophic nature

[4] Analyses by morphological features, by the way in which humus and carbonates are distributed were carried out in Tim Darvill's laboratories; analyses by looking at the isotope composition of humus were carried out in the Institute of Soil Science and Photosynthesis of the Russia Academy of Sciences at Pushchino.

(earthquakes). The archaeological materials found in the upper layer of coarse slope deposits allow us to date them in time, synchronically with the settlements being studied. This must have had an effect on the life of Alan tribes in this region and in particular could have been a reason for certain settlements ceasing to function and the population draining away to more peaceful regions.

Bibliography

Abaev, V.I. *Osetinsky yazyk i fol'klor*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1949.

Ammianus Marcellinus: Ammian Martsellin. *Istorii. Izvestia drevnikh o Skifii i Kavkaze*, tr. by V.V. Latyshev. *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, N 3, Moscow, 1949.

Artamonov, M. *Istoriya Khazar*, Leningrad, 1962.

Arzhantseva I. "From settlement to cities. Alanian proto-cities of the 1st–2nd mil. AD in the North Caucasus." *Urbanism in Medieval Europe*, printed papers of the "Mediaeval Europe" conference, Brugge, ed. Gui De Boe, Frans Verhaeghe vol. I, *Urbanism*, Zellik, 1997, pp. 153–161.

Arzhantseva I., Turova I., Bronnikova M., Zazovskaya E. "Alan settlements of the first millennium in the Kislovodsk Basin, Russia" *British Archaeological Recording*, International Series 987, 2001, pp. 115–124.

Arzhantseva, I., A. "Architecture and landscape in the Mediaeval Archaeology in the Northern Caucasus" *7th Annual meeting of European Association of Archaeologists. Book of abstracts.* Esslingen, 2001, p. 48.

——, "Alans: between Byzantium and Khazaria" Medieval Europe Basel, 2002 Conference, Preprinted papers. Vol. I. ed. Guido Helmig, Barbara Scholkmann, Matthias Untermann, Hertingen, 2002, pp. 441–445.

——, "Issledovaniya alanskikh poseleniy: problemy i metody" *Kul'turnye sloi arkheologicheskikh pamyatnikov. Teoriya, metodika i praktika*, ed. C.A. Sycheva, A.A. Uziyanov, Moscow, 2006, pp. 122–143.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus, see Konstantin Bagryanorodnyi.

Fedorov, Ya., Fedorov, G., *Rannie tiurki na Severnom Kavkaze*. Moscow, 1978.

Gadlo A., *Etnicheskaya istoriya Severnogo Kavkaza IV–X vekov*, Leningrad, 1979.

Iessen A., "Arkheologicheskie pam'yatniki Kabardino-Balkarii" *Materialy i issledovaniya po arkheologii SSSR*, N 3, Moscow-Leningrad, 1941, pp. 7–50.

Kovalevskaya V., *Kavkaz i Alany*, Moscow, 1984.

Kokovtsov P., *Evreisko-Khazarskaya perepiska v X veke*, Leningrad, 1932.

Konstantin Bagryanorodnyi (Constantine Porphyrogenitus), *Ob upravlenii Imperiei.* Moscow, 1989.

Korobov D., "Archaeological prospection in the Kislovodsk basin: GIS and aerial photography" *Archaeological Prospection*, 4th International conference, Vienna, 2001.

Kulakovskiy, Yu. *Alany po svedeniyam klassicheskikh i vizantiiskikh pisatelei*. Kiev, 1898

Kuznetsov, V., *Ocherki istorii Alan*. Vladikavkaz, 1992.

Mamaev, Kh., "Novye alanskie mogil'niki v ploskostnoi i predgornoi Chechено-Ingushetii" *IV Krupnovskie chteniya po arkheologii Kavkaza*, Ordzhonikidze, 1974, pp. 39–40.

Menander Protector: Menandr, *Prodolzhenie istorii Agaf'evoi*, Sankt-Peterburg, 1860.

Novosel'tsev A., *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo i ego rol' v istorii Vostochnoi Evropy i Kavkaza*, Moscow, 1990.

Theophylactus Simocatta (Simocattes): Feofilakt Simokatta, *Istoriya*, Moscow, 1957.

Zeteishvili S., "Svedeniya ob alanakh v 'Khronografii' Feofana" *Drevneishie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 81–86.

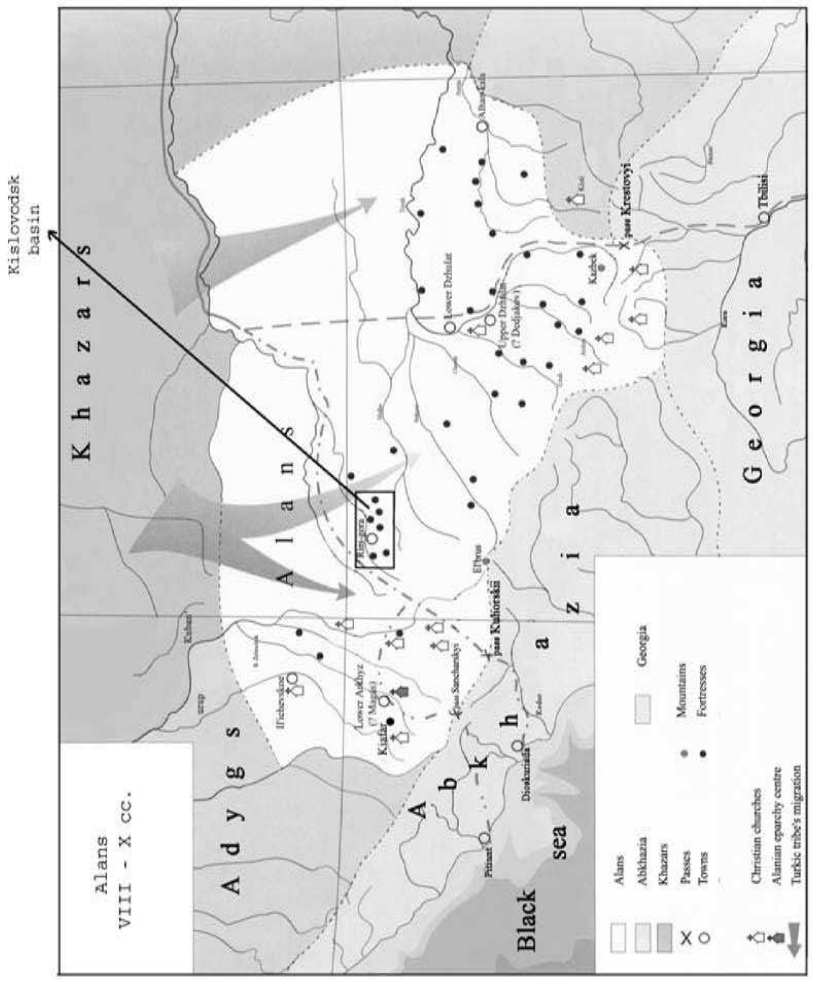


Fig. 1. Northern Caucasus, Alans, VIII–X centuries A.D.

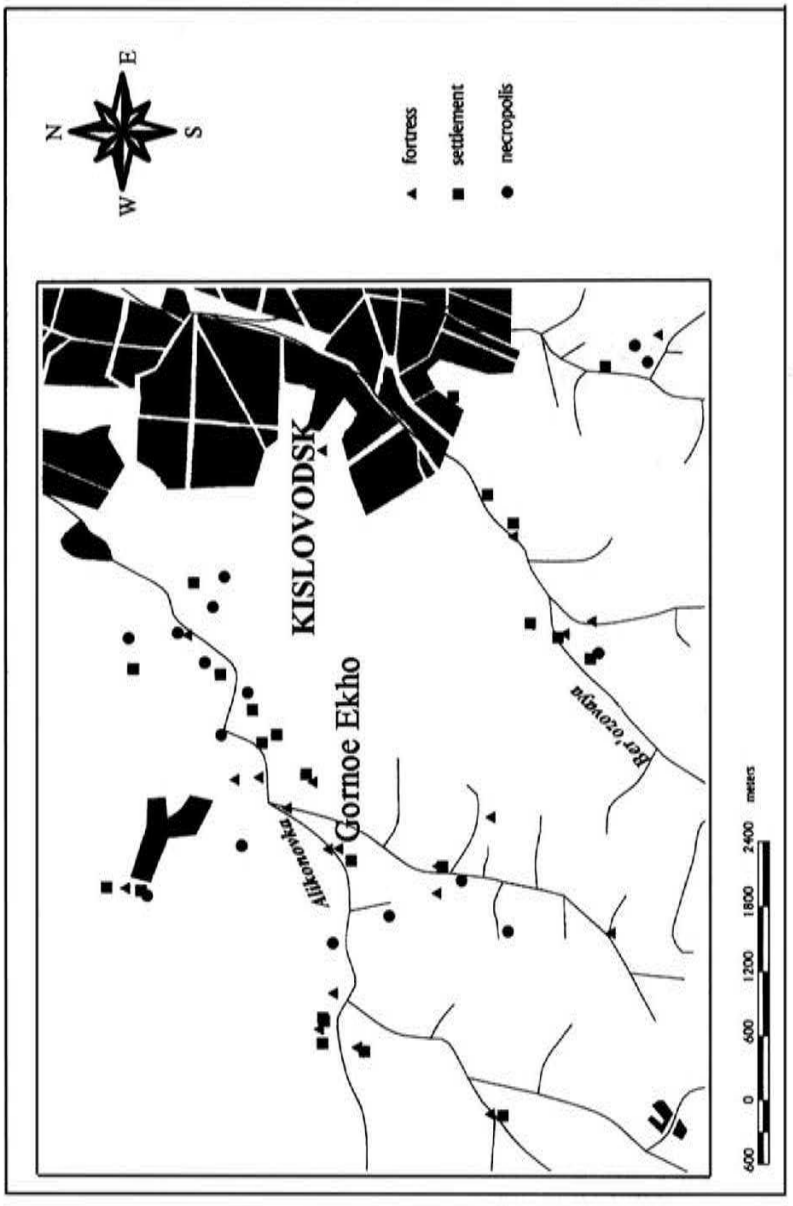


Fig. 2. Northern Caucasus, Kislovodsk basin

Fig. 3. Gornoe Ekho fortress

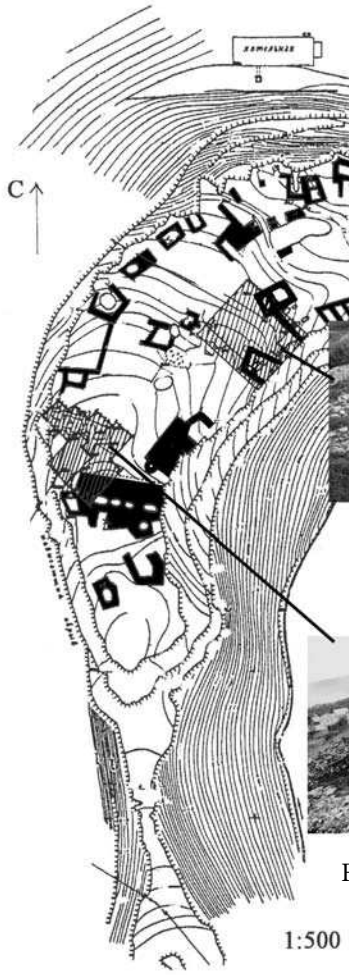


Fig. 5. Gornoe Ekho.
Topographical plan.

Fig. 4. Gornoe Ekho. Remains of living stone structures

Fig. 6. Gornoe Ekho. Transverse wall—the key structure of the fortification system

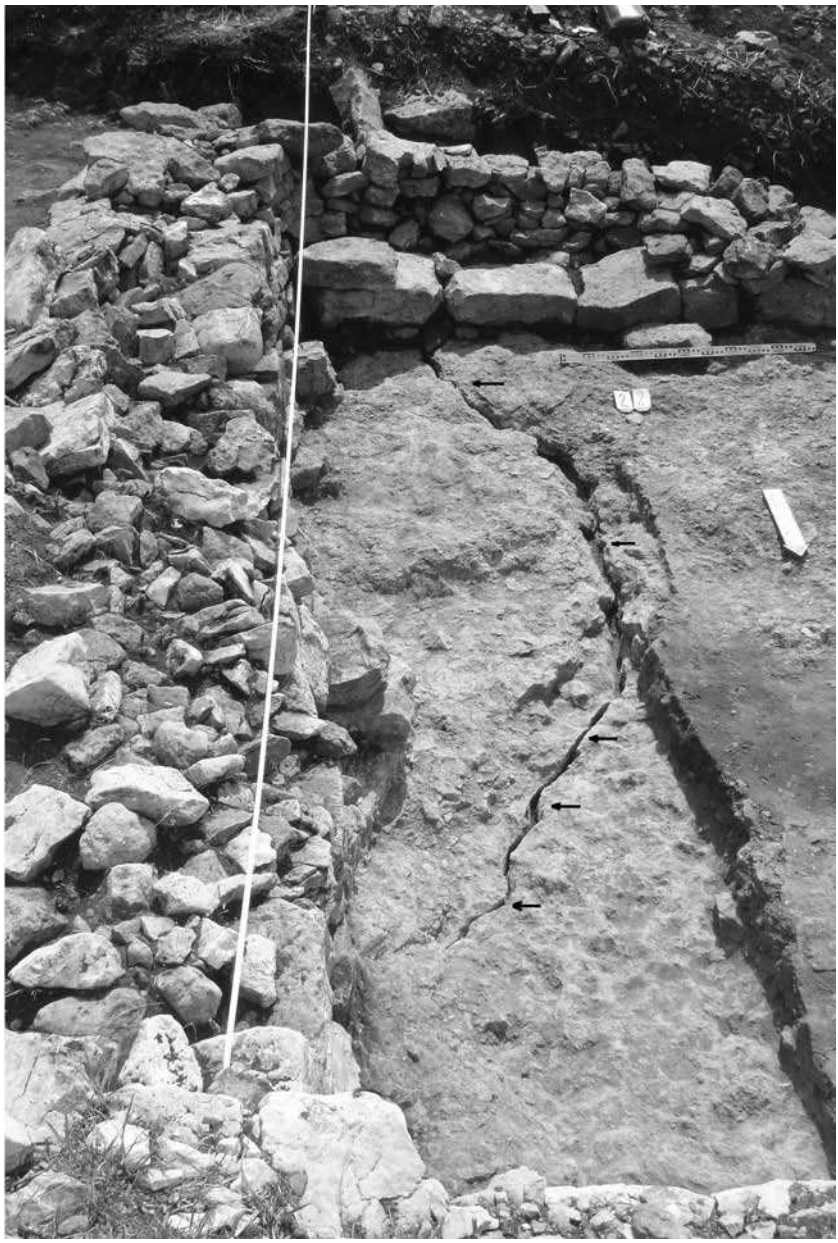


Fig. 7. Gornoe Ekho. Traces of Earthquake—irregular crack among the stone building remanes

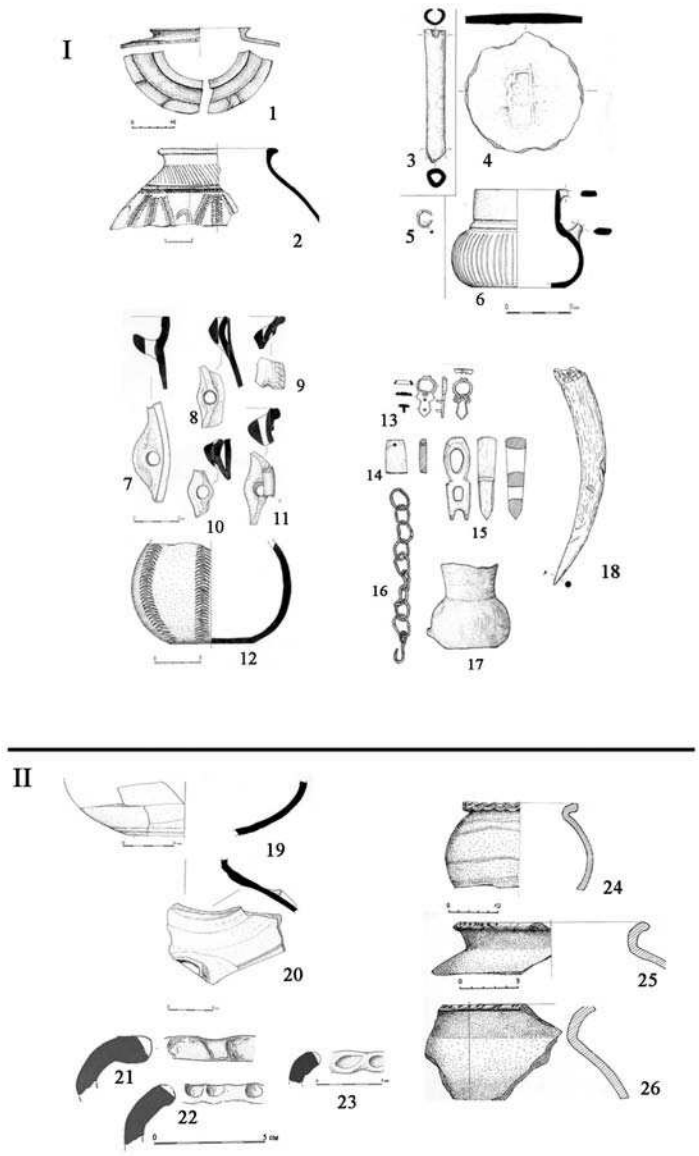


Fig. 8. Gornoe Ekho. Dating materials. I—main occupation deposit (VI–VIII cc. AD): 1, 2, 4, 6–12, 17—pottery; *3, 15, 18*—bone, antler; *5, 13, 16*—metal; *14*—stone
II—late occupation deposit (IX–X cc. AD): *19, 20*—red-clay amphoraes of IX в from Black Sea Coast; *21–26*—red-clay pottery similar to Saltovo culture (time of Khazar Chaganate)

THE KHAZAR LANGUAGE

Marcel Erdal

1. *Introduction*

All scholars who have voiced an opinion on the language of the Khazars in terms of assigning it to a language family take them to have been a Turkic nation[1] speaking a Turkic language.[2] Already in their own age, several Muslim geographers made statements to this effect.[3] Trying to make sense of what remains of their language is therefore the task of Turkic linguistics.

Work carried out during the last decades on this topic started with Golden 1971, an insightful though generally neglected paper. There followed a burst of activity in the early 1980s, when Golden 1980, Ludwig 1982 and Golb & Pritsak 1982 brought together practically all of the relevant material; the article Ligeti 1981[4] is an important review of this latter book. Beside its other assets, Ludwig's dissertation features

---

[1] I deliberately use this term and not 'tribe' because the Khazars do not, even in the earliest stages of their documented history, present themselves as a tribe in the typical early Turkic sense, as were the Chigil, Tuxsï, Yaġma etc.

[2] Golden 2005: 206 points out that Abbasid sources often interchange the nisbas *at-Turkī* and *al-Xazarī*. Still, there must have been very many different ethnic groups within the Khazar realm, as there are to this day on the territory which that realm covered. These groups spoke different languages, some of them no doubt belonging to the Indo-European or different Caucasian language families. A word documented as having been in use in Khazaria need not, therefore, have belonged to the leading nation, the Khazars.

[3] The most recent summary on contemporary Arab statements on this question is Golden 2005: 206 (lower half of the page). If Al-Iṣṭaxrī (quoted there) reports conflicting notices, one stating that "the language of the Khazars is different from the language of the Turks and the Persians, nor does a tongue of any group of humanity have anything in common with it", the other that "the language of the Bulġār is like the language of the Khazars", both cannot be correct if they apply the same criteria of similarity and if they refer to the same language. In principle it might very well be possible that an original Khazar tribe spoke a non-Turkic language and was secondarily Turkified due to its association with the Türk empire in the 6th century; however, I think that Al-Iṣṭaxrī (writing in the first half of the 10th century) or his sources are unlikely to have possessed information on such an early process.

[4] The journal's volume was presumably antedated.

an appendix containing a supplement to the list of Khazar words in Golden 1980; Bazin 1981–82 is also relevant for the language question. The years following this intensive activity saw the appearance of numerous reviews, some of them quite detailed, and of papers taking up, or arguing against, views expressed in the research mentioned. Golden (2002–3, 2005) has recently revived investigations on the Khazar language. However, with the scanty material there is, it seems difficult to get much further than what was achieved in the early 1980s. Thus, concerning some of the ʿAbbāsid slaves whose names are dealt with in Golden 2002–3, their being Khazars by birth is merely an assumption; the names of others cannot help us in the present endeavor because they can be connected with anything Turkic or in any other known language only if they undergo heavy 'emendations'.

It should not be too likely that new Arabic, Greek, Syriac, Persian, Hebrew or Caucasian sources mentioning unknown Khazar language elements turn up at this stage. It now seems that significant progress can be achieved only if some lengthy bilingual inscription in the Khazar language can be discovered, or perhaps a new Khazar inscription which has enough Eastern Turkic runiform characters to be intelligible.[5] The dozens of known inscriptions are strings of at present unintelligible signs, concerning which we do not even know whether they fall into synharmonic sets (as most of the Eastern Turkic runiform script does); none of the attempts at deciphering them seem compelling.[6] Under these circumstances, we can only sum up and comment what has till now been achieved concerning sources in foreign scripts. A summary taking into account Golden's work together with the critical reviews dealing with it and, further, the ideas of others such as the proposals of Pritsak, has never been attempted. Determining what the Khazars spoke might tell us a lot also about their identity and about the history and structure of

[5] Vasil'ev 2005 is a good summary of current views and opinions concerning this matter. The present author is, together with Irina Nevskaya and Larisa Tybykova, engaged in a survey of the runiform graffiti of the Altay Republic, of which we now have more than 80 (more than half of them discovered during the last 3–4 years). Some of these clearly show hitherto non-deciphered characters also found in Eastern Europe. Progress in the study of this material as well as the whole corpus of Eurasian runiform inscriptions will no doubt serve Khazar studies too.

[6] One such instance is discussed in Kljashtornyj, 1991, who also quotes some additional attempts. Much material is brought together in Bajčorov 1989. Kyzlasov 1994 is especially important for placing the Eastern European inscriptions into their general Eurasian context; another important study is Vasary 1998. Tryjarski 2002–4 is an excellent survey of this whole area.

Turkic settlement in Eastern Europe. A sound basis for our hypotheses is important primarily for the description of the Turkic languages and the historical relationships between them, but also in order to ensure that accounts of the Khazars' early history will not rest on pseudo-linguistic arguments.

Among the present-day Turkic languages Chuvash, spoken mostly in the Chuvash republic (situated roughly between Tatarstan and Moscow), constitutes a branch in itself. Its closest relative is Volga Bolgarian, a language directly documented only in 13th and 14th century inscriptions, found mostly on the territory of Tatarstan.[7] This branch appears to have included other, now extinct, dialects, as suggested by words integrated into Hungarian.[8] Scholars agree that the Chuvash-Bolgar branch got separated from the rest of Turkic at a quite early stage; certainly earlier than the oldest Turkic texts we have, which are the Orkhon inscriptions of the early 8th century.[9] The most discussed question concerning the language of the Khazars has been whether it belongs to this aberrant Chuvash-Bolgar branch of Turkic or not. Most Turcologists have thought it did, but Golden 1980, for instance, tended towards the opposite view. Our judgement of ideas concerning Khazar would now be more solid than in the early 1980s, as we now know a lot more about that branch: Several scholars, notably Andras Róna-Tas, have brought their insight into the grammatical and the lexical domain concerning the history of Chuvash, the contacts of the branch with languages surrounding it and other matters,[10] and new Volga Bolgarian inscriptions appeared in the recent decades. Volga Bolgarian turns out to have been well distinct from Common Turkic but still a rather 'normal' Turkic language. The short Nagyszentmiklós bowl inscription in Greek letters is also in line with what one would expect from a 10th century source of the Chuvash-Bolgar branch of the Turkic languages.[11] Nothing in any

[7] See Erdal 1993 for the documentation and description of this language and its place among the Turkic languages.

[8] Fruitful work in this domain is being carried out by Profs. Róna-Tas and Berta. A dictionary encompassing all Turkic loans in Hungarian is in preparation; one of its preliminary versions was Róna-Tas et al. 1995. A recent important publication in this domain is Berta & Róna-Tas 2002. Prof. Róna-Tas also commented an earlier version of the present paper, enhancing it greatly, as did Claus Schönig and Andreas Waibel.

[9] Some scholars assign the earliest of these already to the late 7th century.

[10] Róna-Tas 1982 can serve as an initiation to this topic.

[11] Erdal 1988 has tried to substantiate the view that it represents Danube Bolgarian, the Turkic language spoken by that part of the Bolgars who moved West to the Danube, but widely different views have also been expressed; see below for one of these.

way supports the view, held by Poppe, Pritsak and some others, that the Bolgar-Chuvash branch was somehow intermediate between the Turkic and the Mongolic languages, taken by these scholars to have been genetically related. While the possibility of such genetic relationship can by no means be excluded, I would consider the full appurtenance of the whole of the Chuvash-Bolgar branch to the Turkic languages to be a firm fact. There are some features which Chuvash shares with Mongolian, one of these being the loss of stem-final *k*. One likely explanation for such similarities is that Early Mongolian borrowed its Turkic words from a language of the Bolgar type, when that was still spoken in an area in contiguity with the Mongol homeland.[12] The linguistic elements brought by the Mongolian invasion in the 13th century are easy to identify, and there is no reason to believe that any Mongolic language was spoken west of the Urals prior to Chingis Khan.

One bit of evidence which has been brought forward in support of the early presence in Eastern Europe of ethnic groups speaking Mongolic is the name of the Avar ruler who conquered Pannonia and fought against Byzantium in the 6th century: His name was *Bayan*, which means 'wealthy' in Mongolic and corresponds to Turkic *bay*, same meaning.[13] I do not think that this evidence is conclusively *for* Mongolic: *bayan* may have been the shape of this adjective in Proto-Turkic as well, and could have been retained by the Avars into the 6th century (i.e. preceding the earliest direct evidence from Turkic by more than a century); subsequently it appears to have stayed in use as a title and a proper name. The word could have been borrowed from Turkic into Proto-Mongolic (and further on into Tungus; cf. Doerfer 1965: 259–260) before the stem final /a/ was dropped (the +*n* being, in fact, a suffix).[14] Helimski has in three

[12] This is succinctly formulated in the section 'Mongolic and Bulghar Turkic', pp. 407–410 in Schönig 2003.

[13] In his entry for this word, Moravcsik 1983: 83–84 mentions the names of, among others, this person and also three 8th to 10th century sons or brothers of Onogur or Danubian Bolgar rulers. A further instance has turned up in a Proto-Bolgarian inscription in Greek characters (mentioned in the present, as yet unpublished version of the Hungarian-Turkic etymological dictionary in preparation: in the entry *bán*, a word said to have been borrowed from *bayan* over South Slavic *bān*).

[14] Schönig 2003: 406 mentions this name and two titles, adding that "none of [this] is diagnostic enough to allow firm conclusions". According to Róna-Tas 1990: 15 (footn.), Early Western Turkic *bayan* lives on in Chuvash *puyan* 'rich (person)', which he derives from the "Grundwort" *puy-* 'to become rich'. Chuv. *puy-* is, I think, likelier to be from *bay+u-* (same meaning, well attested in Old Turkic and elsewhere and clearly derived from the adjective *bay*) over **puyă-*: A verb *'bay-'* is not attested anywhere else, and

papers published in 2000 (one with very useful bibliography) and 2003 put forward the idea that the Avars spoke a Tungus language and that the Nagyszentmiklós inscription mentioned above is also in this language. The European term *bayan* could, *in case* this hypothesis should prove to be correct, even be Tungus; the hypothesis is, however, arrived at by some arbitrary stretching of Tungus data, is far-fetched by itself and is therefore rather unlikely.

Any proposal to explain a Khazar element through a stem or a suffix known only from a language other than Turkic should, we think, be rejected unless at least one such element can be *unequivocally* identified on the basis of what we *know* on the history of the Altaic languages.

2. *The Khazar language material*

The intelligible core of Khazar—not only the titles[15] but also denotative nouns such as *dog* 'funerary feast', *ït* 'dog'[16] or *bulan* 'elk',[17] the adjective *alp* 'valiant',[18] the words for 'white', 'yellow' and 'black', the agentive suffix *+čI* used in several Khazar words, the diminutive suffix *+Ak*,[19] the suffix *+šIn*

Proto-Turkic cannot be shown to regularly have used stems as both nouns and verbs; Chuvash final high vowels are, on the other hand, often syncopated (as in *śar* 'army' < *čärig*). As correctly pointed out by Levitskaja 1976: 92, Chuvash *-An* no doubt comes from Proto-Turkic **-gAn*: The early *-gAn* derivate of *bayu-* would therefore have been **bayugan* and not *bayan*; had there been a verb *'bay-'*, its *-gAn* derivate would have been '*baygan*'. The name of the Uygur khan who reigned between 747 and 759 has also been posited as *Bayan čor* (though *buyan* < Skt. *puṇya* might be another possible reading of the Chinese characters). *Bayan* cannot have been formed with the formative *-Xn* described for Old Turkic in Erdal 1991: 300–308, as its second vowel couldn't have been /a/ if it came from *bayu-* or indeed from (unattested) *'bay-'*; since this formative appears to have been dominant (cf. *uzun* < *uza-*, *tükün* < *tükä-*, *yarïn* < *yaru-* etc.), it would even be unlikely to come from a putative *'bay+a-'* (for which cf. Turkish *boşa-* beside Old Turkic *bošo-*).

[15] Titles often wander from one people to the other and are thus no proof of national identity; *Hilitβēr*, dealt with below, is one such term. The most comprehensive account of the Khazar titles is Golden 1980.

[16] See Erdal 1991a.

[17] In Golb & Pritsak 1982 referred to by Golden 1984: 478, Pritsak connected this noun (also the name of a Khazar *kagan*) with the name *Bulčan* appearing in Arabic sources, taking it to be its "Hunno-Bolgaric" equivalent. This contradicts historical sound laws, as Common Turkic 'elk' is also *bulan* and not *'bušan'*. Golden 1980: 171–3 correctly discusses *Bulčan* separately.

[18] This element appears as a proper name of two persons, as does *Alïp* (explicitly spelled thus twice) in three Volga Bolgarian inscriptions.

[19] Cf. Erdal 1991: 39–42, where the probable Iranian origin of this suffix is also mentioned.

added to colour terms[20]—these are definitely and exclusively Turkic.[21] A few additional terms not hitherto identified as Turkic could be added, e.g. the one spelt *'l-ğd ʾdh*, quoted by Golden 1980: 247. Among the elements mentioned in that book, this is one of the two[22] which is neither a proper name nor a toponym nor a title: It refers to a kind of travelling tent-car. This might just possibly be an attempt to write **čadára*, since *d* and *r* look similar and can get confused in mss. in Arabic script if the word is unknown to the reader.[23] This word would then be an instance of *ča:tır* (Turkic)/*čador* (Persian), *šātor* (pronounced thus in Hungarian) etc., signifying 'tent'; it is dealt with in detail in Doerfer 1967: 16–22.

A further hitherto unidentified term is the title جاوشيغر, by Golden 1980: 191–2 transcribed as **Jāwašīğar*. Since this person is, according to Ibn Faḍlān (fol. 212b, Togan 1939: 99), the third in the hierarchy under the Khazar co-ruler in charge of the army, it is fitting for him to be called *Čavïš-yïgar*; this reading perfectly fits the attested spelling. In the early Turkic administration, the *čavïš* were those who marshalled the ranks in battle and were in charge of order at court; the term is known since the Orkhon inscriptions and defined by Kāšġarī. This person must have been the official in charge of the Khazar *čavïš* corps: *yïg-ar* means 'one who assembles or convenes'.[24] If this idea[25] is correct, it must denote an

---

[20] In the name of the town *Sarïgšïn* which Golden 1980: 237–9 tentatively locates on the lower Volga; see below.

[21] I mean that the sum total of these elements—including proper names, toponyms and components of these—gives a Turkic picture. *alp* was also borrowed into various Uralic languages and *+čI* into many Asian and South East European ones; such terms could, of course, in principle also have been loans into Khazar.

[22] The other one is a kind of woman's clothing called τζιτζάκιον (two of the thirteen instances show the variant τζιτζιάκιον), mentioned by the 10th century Byzantine emperor and author Konstantinos Porphyrogennitos. Moravcsik explains it as Turkic *čiček* 'flower', suggesting that this must have been the original Khazar name of the Khazar lady known as Eiréne (Greek 'peace'), who became Byzantine empress in the 8th century. Golden 1980: 175–6 agrees with Moravcsik's view and lists the word as a personal name. Konstantinos only says that this was the name of the garment the empress wore, not her proper name; I find Moravcsik's idea far-fetched and would think the name of the garment may e.g. have been due to its colourfulness. One is also reminded of Hebrew *cicít*, 'a Jewish ceremonial shawl with fringes', *ciciot* 'fringes'.

[23] Golden quotes the single Arabic ms. extant, but mentions that there is an early Persian translation of the source; it would be worth finding out how the word is spelled there.

[24] A central Old Turkic meaning of *yïg-* is 'convening a number of persons'. Kljashtornyj 1991: 114 suggests emending *yā*, the third-last letter of this title, to *nūn*, and then proposes an interpretation involving the names of two birds (one in truncated form); this seems quite unacceptable to me. Most recently, Golden 2005: 214 proposed deriving the title from **javaš* 'gentle' by an obscure suffix, but this also demands an 'emendation'.

[25] The interpretation *čavïš*/*čavuš* of the first part of this title was already proposed by Frähn and Marquart; cf. Togan 1939: 260. Köprülü's detailed encyclopaedia entry on

office corresponding to the *çavuş-başı* in the Ottoman administration (an adjunct of the grand vizier and the head of the *çavuş* corps in the *dīvān*). *čavïš* would here be the object of *yïg-*: We find the structure 'object noun' + 'governing verb in the aorist form' also e.g. in the name of the 19th century *Eltüzär khan* or in the title *orunbasar* < *orun* 'place', *bas-* 'to tread': This term signifies 'deputy' in Modern Uygur, Kïrghïz, Kazakh, Uzbek, Turkmen, Tatar, Bashkir and no doubt elsewhere as well. This means that the *čavïšyïgar* was the 'marshal' bringing together all the *čavïš*.

Most Khazar terms which have been shown to come from specific non-Turkic languages are titles;[26] in general, a great number of mostly pre-Turkic titles were passed on from one ancient and medieval Central Eurasian political entity to another. One such title is the second element in the names of two Khazars referred to in Armenian sources, *Ałpʿ iłutʿuēr* and *Xatʿirlitʿbēr*.[27] Golden 1980 correctly takes this to be the title which Vilhelm Thomsen in his edition of the Bilgä Qagan inscription spells as ä[t]äbär (E 37) and ä]täbär (E 40).[28] Rásonyi (referred to in Golden 1980: 149–150 and Doerfer 1965: 202) suggested that this title consists of the Turkic noun *el* signifying, among other things, 'realm', followed by the aorist of *täp-* 'to kick'. Golden 1980: 150 compares it to *Elteriš* (Kök Türk ruler), *Alp el etmiš* (ruler of the Uygur steppe empire) and the Uygur names *El Almıš Sängün, El Tutmıš* and *El Qatmıš*. This is highly unlikely, among other reasons because (as Doerfer 1965: 203 points out) the Orkhon Turkic aorist of *täp-* would be *täpär*. Much has already been written on this title, referred to by Golden and Doerfer; it appears in different sources, including Chinese, in quite a number of forms: The Arab traveler Ibn Faḍlān has it with a /y/ before the initial vowel, as يلطوار;[29] see Doerfer 1965 and Sims-Williams 2002: 235 for other varieties. Four Bactrian instances were recently added to this rich

---

çavuş (1963: 363a) states that the Khazars used the title *çavuşyar* (thus!) and also mentions the reading of '*çaüş*' as a Pecheneg word by Németh 1932: 56 f.

[26] The originally Iranian *kel* 'house' is an exception. The patronym *Kundājīq* discussed as Iranian by Golden 1980 is dealt with differently in Golden 2002–3; for this name and the possibly Mongol title underlying it see also Golden 2005: 214.

[27] *Alp* is, of course, of Turkic origin, as is the first part in the Bactrian sequence referred to below; this might be the case also with the first part of the second name.

[28] Thomsen 1896: 182 (note 102) thought he might be seeing traces of an I in the beginning of the E 40 instance, pointing at a reading like *eltäbär*/*eltäbir*. There are, all in all, seven or eight instances of this term in runiform inscriptions, none of which have any explicit initial vowel. In view of some of the instances quoted below, the *i-* might, however, be a possibility.

[29] See Togan 1939: 105 for the reading, its interpretation and further evidence. Róna-Tas 1982: 166–7, dealing with this and with other Arab script evidence for this title, already says it "is not necessarily of Turkic origin".

documentation: In texts N, N', P and Q, dealt with in Sims-Williams 2000: 74–89, a certain ruler is referred to as *Tapaylıγ Hilitbēr* or *Tapaylıγ Hilitβēr*. The first word in this sequence can only be analyzed as Turkic *tap-Xg+lXg*, from *tap-* 'to revere':[30] cf. also the person referred to as *Tap(a)γl(ı)γ Sangun* in the *Mahrnamag* (l. 56), a Manichæan hymn book written in the 8th century.[31] In the glossary to his edition, Sims-Williams points out that the title discussed here is attested as *lytβyr* in l. 91–92 of the *Mahrnamag*; this had not previously been noticed. This latter variant reminds us of *Xatʿirlitʿbēr* (assuming with Golden that *Xatʿir* is an element by itself), whereas its labial consonant is more like that of *iłutʿuēr*. The Sogdian variant *δyttpyr* / *ryttpyr* quoted in Sims-Williams 2002: 235 has the labial consonant as a stop.[32] The title is only once attested in Turkic in Uygur script, as *Uygur iltbär+kä bermiš* 'he gave her to the Uygur I.';[33] all other Turkic examples are in runiform sources, in which there are no explicit vowels. The last vowel of this title is clearly long, as shown by a number of examples. Among the numerous instances, not a single one shows a vowel after the *t*; on the other hand all instances with explicit non-long vowels have a high vowel after the *l*. All this should finally put the Turkic etymologies for this title to rest: The reading *'el-täbär'* (structured as *El-tüzär* mentioned above) is untenable. According to Sims-Williams 2002: 235, "the initial aspirate of the Bactrian spelling suggests that it may be a Khalach form, since the consistent preservation of [h-] is one of the most notable features distinguishing Khalach from other Turkish dialects".[34] This initial /h/ may indeed explain the y ~ Ø alternation in the evidence.

We owe to Ludwig 1982: 356–357 the (quite solid) evidence from Theophanes (mid 8th century) for the word which proves that the Khazar language must be an especially archaic variety of Turkic: He shows that *dog* / *δog* was also the Khazar variant of Orkhon Turkic *yog* 'funerary feast', beside being that of the 6th century first Türk dynasty as quoted in Greek sources.[35]

---

[30] The [a] in the second syllable is normal in Old Uygur suffixes with a velar.

[31] The ms. must be a later copy; see Müller 1912: 10.

[32] In early borrowings into Sogdian, foreign /l/ is rendered as δ, in late borrowings as *r*; the *p* can be read as [b].

[33] Ms. U 1a part II v 3, edited by Le Coq 1912: 147. Wilkens 2000: 74 (text 49); clearly readable on the internet.

[34] Note, though, that initial /h/ may at this early date still have existed in other Turkic varieties as well.

[35] Since the Khazars were in contact with the Western Türk, indeed being their vas-

3. *Phonetic evidence for Khazar classification*

Balḫī's statement that *lisān bulġār miṯla lisāni 'l-ḫazar* is quoted (among others) by Benzing 1959: 691, though I would not accept his translation "daß die Sprache der Bolgaren dieselbe sei wie die der Chasaren": مثل can also denote 'similarity' (in any sense) and not necessarily 'identity'. To balance this we have, at any rate, the statement of (10th century) Iṣṭaxrī (quoted e.g. in Golden 1980: 56 with page reference to the edition) about the Khazars' language that 'no distinct tongue of mankind shares any of its characteristics' (*lā yušārikuhu lisān fāriq mina 'l-umam*). Golden 1980: 56–7 discusses the question of the classification of Khazar with reference to views expressed by Zajączkowski and Baskakov, which he convincingly refutes. The language being so archaic (as indeed one would expect in view of its early documentation), evidence which might be thought to disqualify a Bolgar-Turkic *or* a Common Turkic profile for Khazar must be weighed carefully, to see whether some feature characteristic of one or of the other language branch may not have come into existence at a stage later than Khazar evidence. This matter has already been pointed out in reviews to Golden 1980. Golden had stated that the title *tudun* speaks against assignment of the Khazar language to Bolgar-Chuvash, as the sound shift *d* > *r* is not found in it; but in fact the passage *d* > *r* (or δ > r) should probably be dated later than the end of the 7th century, the time for which the title is attested;[36] the earliest evidence for Volga-Bolgarian *turun* is in 1230.[37]

We are lucky in being able to divide the typical features of Bolgar-Turkic into two groups: The features which elements of this branch of Turkic share with Mongolic cognates (A) existed already before its speakers left Eastern Asia; the features which it does not share with Mongolic (B) are innovations which emerged in the west. The B features—the Western innovations—could have come up during a Western community phase (B_1), in which case they would be shared by Chuvash-Bolgar and Khazar; alternatively (B_2), they could have come up after a separation of

---

sals for some time, it would not be surprising if they borrowed some lexemes from them. However, this term clearly denoting a traditional religious practice, it seems an unlikely word to borrow; the relationship between the two states appears to have been political rather than cultural.

[36] See Johanson 1983.

[37] See Róna-Tas 1982: 158. The *d*/*r* question is dealt with also in Erdal 1993: 137–141, and cf. below.

Khazar and Chuvash-Bolgar, possibly even after Khazar had died out: The replacement of /d/ by /r/ just mentioned is a B_2 feature of Bolgar-Chuvash, since it is not shared by Khazar. If a Western innovation (B) found in Bolgar-Chuvash *is* shared by Khazar (B_1), that indicates proximity and *would* entitle us to consider Khazar to belong to this group; if it does not (B_2), this does *not* prove that Khazar did not belong to this section of Turkic, as the emergence of this feature might postdate the Western community stage. If, however, any A feature—a feature shared by Bolgar-Chuvash and Mongolic—is not found in Khazar, this would be clear proof that Khazar is not part of the Bolgar-Chuvash section of Turkic. Note that both B_1 and B_2 features can in principle be found also in languages which we know to be 'normal' Turkic, such as the Kipchak languages, which also entered the 'western' Turkic contact and sharing area at some stage in history.

What, then, are the A features, the ones which can be reconstructed for Proto-Bolgar and Proto-Mongolic in the lexicon they shared and which the Ancient Bolgars brought with them when leaving South Siberia and travelling to the west?

a) The shared lexicon of the Bolgar branch and Mongolic have /r/ where all other Turkic languages have /z/ instead.
b) The Bolgar branch and Mongolic have /l/, /lč/ or /lj/ where all other Turkic languages have /š/ instead; in Chuvash /lč/ and /lj/ become /ś/.[38]
c) The Bolgar branch and Mongolic have the voiced palatal affricate [j] in word onset where Old Turkic[39] and some other Turkic languages have [y] instead.

[38] Much of the evidence for this is brought together in Tekin 1979: 130–132. This correspondence appears in *baš* 'head', or, e.g., in the reciprocal-cooperative suffix *-Xš-*, as also shown by synonymous Mongolian *-(U)lčA-*. In both of these cases, Volga-Bolgarian retains /lč/ and Chuvash has /ś/, not /l/. Róna-Tas 1999 shows that, in two suffixes, Chuvash /š/ corresponds to the Common Turkic cluster /nč/.

[39] We know this thanks to sources in Brāhmī, Tibetan and Arabic script, with reasonable certainty also sources in Manichaean script. The runiform characters y_1 and y_2 *may* conceivably have had the secondary value *j* as well, *in case* this was the onset allophone of /y/ there. *If* this sound existed in Orkhon Turkic at all, it could also have been written with the letter *č* (e.g. in the name spelled *Maqarač*, which is written with *j* and not *č* in Sanskrit). The Classical Mongolian script, adapted from the Uygur script, used the letter *yōd* also for representing onset [j] and we don't know whether the Mongols did not copy this practice from the Turks they were in contact with.

d) Proto-Turkic /ā/ and /e/[40] can appear as /ï/ and /i/ respectively (both apparently realised as [i]) in Mongolic.[41] In Volga Bolgarian, /ā/ > /ïa/ > /ya/ and /e/ > /iä/ > /yä/.[42]
e) /s/ has an allophone /š/ before /i/ in Bolgar Turkic and in Mongolic; there is no such phenomenon in any other Turkic language.
f) A palatalization of /t/ to /č/ is attested in Mongolic and Chuvash, only to a very limited extent in Volga Bolgarian, and not attested anywhere elsewhere in the Turkic world.
g) Mongolic and Chuvash share the loss of Common Turkic voiceless velars at the end of nominal stems. I am not aware of such a phenomenon in Bolgarian.

Which of these phenomena do we find in what has survived of Khazar?

(a) *Rhotacism*

The fortress whose name is spelled as Σαρκελ in Greek and שרכיל (*s/šrkyl*) or שרכל (*s/šrkl*) in Hebrew[43] was built in 838, for and by Khazars, and was not inherited from any Turkic tribe which might previously have come into the area (e.g. the Bolgars). The name is therefore highly likely to be Khazar and not one taken over from some other Turkic language. The second part of this name was probably borrowed from the lost West Middle Iranian cognate of Sanskrit *gṛha* 'house', Russian *gorod* 'town', Gothic *garths* 'house' and so forth.[44] In Turkic, this element lives

[40] /e/ is the front counterpart of /ā/, having evolved from long /ä/.

[41] Although Proto-Turkic /a/ and /ä/ are sometimes raised also in Tuvan and Yakut, there is in those languages no connection to original vowel length.

[42] In Volga Bolgarian *jāl* 'year' corresponding to common Turkic *yāš* 'wet; year of age', the onset /y/ appears to have been incorporated into the /j/. In this language, both long and short /o/ and /ö/ (and sometimes /ü/) of Proto-Turkic also become falling diphthongs (with onset /w/).

[43] The difference between the Greek and the Hebrew sibilants consists in the placing of a diacritical dot in Hebrew, the use of which was (and is) not obligatory in the first place. Hebrew also has another, unequivocal letter for expressing the sound /s/, but that letter was not put to use in any of the early instances in which the name appears in Hebrew writing. Golden 2005: 208 states that שרכיל "can be read as *Šarkîl* (more likely given Medieval Hebrew traditions of transcribing foreign terms) or *Sarkîl*". I think medieval Hebrew traditions do not necessarily speak for *š*, as *sīn* for [s] is also very common. Furthermore, *yōd* was regularly used also for representing [e] and not just long or short [i].

[44] Munkácsi 1905 actually lists words of the shape /k/-vowel-/l/ in several Finno-Ugrian and a number of East Caucasian languages as well as in Ossetic and Kurdish, having very similar meanings; the areal diffusion of this Iranian term does seem to be in need of some further elucidation. Connecting Chuvash *kil* (~ *kel*) 'house' with an

on in the Turkish and Azeri suffix *+gil*, which is used for referring to a set of persons in some way (e.g. as family members) attached to the person referred to by the noun serving as base (cf. Samojlovič 1925). Golden 2005: 208–9, who deals with this city name and its cognates in some detail, also quotes a Circassian tale which mentions *Sarqahλ* in connection with the *Qazahrə*. Turkish *+gil* is an untypical suffix in not following vowel harmony and in being unstressed and thus betrays its origin as a separate word. *Sarkel* / *Šarkel* was synonymous with the etymologies of both *Casablanca* and *Belgrade*: The first part of Σαρκελ is translated into Greek as άσπρον or λευκόν, both 'white'. To judge by this meaning, Khazar *sār* / *šār* 'white, pale' would *not* be identical with *sārïg* 'yellow'; this latter served as base for the name of another Khazar town, *Sārïgšïn*. As Tezcan, 1975: 104–107 has shown,[45] Common Turkic also has, beside *sārïg*, a word *sāz* 'pale'. *sāz*, attested with a long vowel in Turkmen,[46] is the real cognate of the Khazar term. In Karachay-Balkar north of the Caucasus—in Khazar country—and also in Kïrghïz as well as in Ottoman and in Anatolian dialects, *saz* denotes 'a pale complexion'. Yakut *ās*, which also must come from *sāz*, denotes a 'white horse's hide', while Kazakh and Kïrghïz have the derivate *saz+ar-u* 'to become pale'. From this *sāz* a verbal derivate in *+I-* appears to have been formed, of the type discussed in Erdal 1991, section 5.42;[47] this was then expanded to *sārï-g* by using *-(X)g*, the common formative for forming nouns and adjectives from verbs. The sound-law counterpart of Classical Mongolian *šira* 'yellow' is *sāz*,[48] just as Mongolian *bora* corresponds to Turkic *boz* 'grey, light brown': Turkic /z/ regularly corresponds to Mongolian /r/, Mongolian [š] is regular for /s/ before /i/, and Turkic long *ā* turns up in Mongolian as /i/ in other cases as well. Chuvash *šur* also comes from *sāz* since it means 'white, pale'; Chuvash *šură* could, by sound

---

Evenki (i.e. Tungus) term (borrowed into Yakut), as advocated by Fedotov 1996: 291–292 (quoted by Golden 2005: 209), is clearly highly far fetched—beside the fact that the /u/ of the Evenki term makes the etymological connection impossible.

[45] Followed by Tekin 1979: 129. Tezcan 1975 remains unpublished.

[46] In phrases such as *daŋ sāzï* 'early morning light'; the verb *ağarmak* in *tan yeri ağarmak*, the Turkish counterpart of this phrase, is derived from *ak* 'white'.

[47] As *sämiz* 'fattened, stuffed' gave *sämri-* 'to grow fat', *sekiz* 'a jump' gave *sekri-* 'to jump' and *yavïz* 'bad' gave *yavrï-* 'to grow weak', thus *sāz* was expanded with this same suffix to give a verb **sārï-*, which survives only in Chuvash *šur-* 'to become white'. The passage s > š before long vowels, a > u and the loss of the final /ï/ are all regular developments for Chuvash.

[48] And not *sārïg*, as generally assumed: Mongolic *a#* does not correspond to Turkic *ïg#*, but an extra vowel in Mongolic is normal.

laws, come either from *sāz* or from *sārïg*, but has the same meaning as *šur*.[49] Both *sāz* and *sārïg* were adopted by Hungarian (where the letter *s* is pronounced as [š]): Hungarian *sár* 'yellow' comes from *sāz* while Hungarian *sarog* and *sárga* (same meaning) come from *sārïg*. The oldest instance of Hungarian *sár* quoted by Róna-Tas et al. 1995: 26, which is from the year 1332, mentions a 'horse in *sár* colour', exactly as in Yakut *ās* (< *sāz*) on the other end of Eurasia.[50]

Going just by sound processes, *sar* / *šar* can have been shortened from *sarïg* through simplification of the medial cluster /g-k/ and the common syncopation of the high vowel after the /r/ (**sārïgkel* > **sārïkel* > *sarkel*); by this, the word would not serve as evidence for rhotacism. The semantics of Turkic itself seem to speak against this possibility, but in Mongolic and Hungarian the base as well appears to have signified 'yellow'. No certainty can therefore be gained from this for the hypothesis that Khazar belonged to the Bolgar-Chuvash branch of Turkic.

Another much discussed[51] problem for the theory that the language of the Khazars belonged to the Bolgar-Chuvash section of Turkic languages is their name: It has a /z/, which a rhotacistic language is not supposed to have. Consequently, the various solutions proposed for the origin of this name all assume a form which had /s/ as second consonant; this /s/ is then supposed to have gotten voiced between vowels. As Ligeti 1981: 18 points out, the name is in Chinese and Pahlavi sources as well as in the runiform Terkh and Tes inscriptions from the Uygur Steppe Empire spelled with an *s*. The problem with this idea is that there is no evidence whatsoever that the Khazar language—or Bolgar, for that matter—voiced consonants in general, or /s/ in particular, between vowels; Chuvash does do this, but it appears to be a late phenomenon.[52] To judge

[49] *šură pit*, e.g., means 'a pale complexion'; cf. also the denominal verb *šurăx-* 'to become white or pale' (formed with *+(X)k-*, the general Turkic suffix for forming intransitive verbs from nouns and adjectives).

[50] Rybatzki 1994: 200 states: "In den südsibirischen Türksprachen trägt *sarïγ* auch die Bedeutung ‚weiß: graulich, isabellfarben, *flavus*' but his sources are papers on Samoyed (in which the Turkic term is merely a borrowing). The non-yellow hues appear to be linked with horses' colours, also in the Mongolic languages which he quotes.

[51] E.g. by Golden 1980, Ligeti 1981: 18, Bazin 1981–82, Róna-Tas *passim* and in fact already by Gombocz. The various points of view are summed up in Golden 1992: 233–4.

[52] Volga Bolgarian evidence is weak on this matter: It consists of the form *ulemā+sem+ne* 'the scholars (acc.)' in an inscription from 1314 (Erdal 1993: 87–8) with the retention of /s/ between vowels; we are not sure about the juncture of the plural suffix (perhaps borrowed from Finno-Ugric), however, nor whether voicing would have been permitted to interfere with consistent spelling.

by *Ätil*, the Khazar name of the Volga and also of the Khazar capital on the shores of this river, the Khazar language did not, at any rate, voice /t/ between vowels; otherwise, the name would have had a /d/ instead of a /t/ (as in modern Tatar). Nor did any other known variety of Turkic before the 14th century show voicing between vowels: The Arabic writing system, for one, would definitely have made this visible, e.g. in Volga Bolgarian. However, rhotacism in the middle of the name *xazar* might have been prevented by the /r/ at the end of it, *if* the original name had a /z/ after all: Turkic languages are known to have often avoided two consecutive /r/s. Even if the /z/ were original and not an allophone of /s/, therefore, this would not be a real proof that the language did not belong to the Bolgar-Chuvash branch. Ligeti points out that the name of the Chuvash has both initial *č* and final *š*, which would have changed to other sounds if this had been an inherited word.

(b) *Lambdacism*

Róna-Tas (personal communication) has proposed that the name of the important Khazar city *Xamlïx* (Golden 1980 no. 47) comes from *Kamïš+lïk* 'an area covered with reeds'; this is indeed a likely name for a place on the banks of a river (as *Xamlïx* is). What Róna-Tas has in mind with this is **xamïl* > Chuvash *xăмăl* 'stubble', which would entail the sound change š > l typical of the Bolgar-Chuvash group: **xamïl+lïx* could easily have gotten simplified to *Xamlïx*. This etymology gains in certainty by the fact that *qamïl* is the Ossetic word for 'reed': It was clearly borrowed into Alan (the medieval predecessor of modern Ossetic) from Bolgar-Chuvash Turkic.[53] No contemporaries unfortunately proposed any translation for *Xamlïx*, though, and Golden (most recently 205: 213, with variants) reads the name as *Xam-malïx* < **Xam-balïx* < **Xan-balïx* 'the king's city' (also the name of Beijing in Yuan times). Nor can we follow Golden's rejection of the interpretation of *Xam+lïx* as 'shaman (*qam* ~ *xam*) area'—what do we know about the religious practices of the Khazars before some or most of them decided to adopt Judaism?

Boluščï, the Turkic name of the 10th century Khazar general whose Hebrew name was *Pesax*, might actually be considered as evidence against the Bolgar-Chuvash identity of this language, as its sibilant

[53] See Róna-Tas 2005: 208 ff.

appears to contradict lambdacism. The name (which actually means 'helper, supporter') would be acceptable as Bolgar-Chuvash if we take the second syllable to contain the reciprocal-cooperative suffix, which became *-(Ă)ś-* (not *-(Ă)l-*) in Chuvash; **bol-Xš-Xš+čï* would give *bol-uš+čï* by syncopation.[54] The fact that the verb base ends in /l/ would also have been a dissimilating factor, just as the regular Bolgar-Chuvash change of d > r is blocked before /r/ (as first pointed out by Clark 1978). *bol-uš-*, originally 'to be for each other', came to signify 'to help, support, aid', *bol-uš* (<**bol-Xš-Xš*) 'succour, support': It is attested with this meaning in the *Dīvān Luġāti 't-Turk*[55] (fol. 322 and 184 respectively) and a number of times in Rabġūzī's *Qiṣaṣu 'l-Anbiyā'*, then in (practically all!) Middle Kipchak sources and Modern Kipchak languages.[56] Chuvash also has *pulăš-* and (much rarer) *pulăš* with the meaning 'help', but these must be borrowings from Kipchak, as they have /š/ and not /ś/. In fact, *Bolušči* might already be such a borrowing, in view of the name of *Boluš'*, the Khan of the Polovcy (i.e. Kumans) who invaded Ruś in 1054 (referred to by Golden 1980: 169). The rare agentive use of the suffix *-Xš* in the proper name *Boluš'*[57] (which makes sense only if given with this special semantic development in mind) was clearly unknown to the parents of *Bolušči*, who felt the need to add the agentive suffix *+čI*, whether they themselves happened to be ethnically Khazar or not.

We seem to have no certain Khazar evidence for lambdacism. The /š/ in the title *Čaviš-yïgar* proposed above is, on the other hand, a real problem for the hypothesis that Khazar belongs to the Bolgar-Chuvash branch; considering this (as well) to be a borrowed element would be a too simple and ad hoc solution.

---

[54] The *-Xš* derivate from *bol-* 'to become' would have been an abstract noun merely signifying 'becoming'; cf. Erdal 1991: 265.

[55] We refer to this according to the edition of the (11th century) Turkic material by Dankoff & Kelly 1982–4, henceforth using the abbreviation DLT.

[56] These languages are listed e.g. in Berta 1996: 96–97 and Schönig 2005; 397 (who deals with the different terms for 'help' in the various Turkic languages); this meaning occurs also e.g. in (South Siberian) Shor and in New Uygur. Old Uygur and other Middle Turkic sources appear to use *bol-uš-* only in the literal sense deriving from the sum of its parts, however, and languages like Turkish and Turkmen have other semantic developments not related to 'help'. Part of the mss. of the *Qiṣaṣu 'l-Anbiyā'* and a part of its sections show Kïpchak influence.

[57] It is in the onomastic tradition of *El Teriš* 'Organizer of the Realm', the throne name given to *Kutlug* after he founded the second Türk empire in the 7th century. The grammatically similar proper names *Atïš, Süŋüš, Tokïš* and *Utuš*, mentioned in the DLT, all glorify fighter qualities. Cf. Erdal 1991: 266, and 115 for *+(X)ščI*.

(c) *The onset voiced palatal affricate*

A further non-Bolgar aspect of the term *Čaviš-yïgar* would be that its second part starts with /y/ and not /j/; unlike, that is, Volga Bolgarian *jieti* '7' compared to Old Turkic *yeti, jiyermi* '20' compared to *yigirmi, jür* '100' compared to *yüz* or *jāl* 'year' compared to *yïl* or perhaps *yaš*. Assuming that the verb 'to assemble' was alive in Khazar,[58] it is not very likely that its /y/ should have been retained just because it was not at the word onset. In any case we have no *positive* evidence for the voiced palatal affricate in this language. The Mongolic documentation is especially interesting: Classical Mongolian had both onset /y and onset /j/, but early words with Turkic cognates all had /j/ and not /y/.

(d) *The diphthongisation of low long vowels*

Proto-Turkic *sāz* 'pale, white' and its derivate *sārıg* 'yellow' have long vowels in Proto-Turkic; this length appears to have been retained in the toponym *Sārïgšïn*, since sources in Arabic script spell it with *alif* in the first syllable. In the Bolgar branch such length appears as a diphthong in Volga Bolgarian *xyan* 'blood' < *kān*, and the vowel of the 'white' / 'yellow' stem becomes /i/ in Mongolic *šira*.[59] In both Mongolic and Chuvash, the palatal onset proceeds to palatalize any /s/ preceding it. No such phenomenon is visible in the two Khazar toponyms of which this stem is a part; the /a/ is spelled as a homogenous vowel, whether with length marked as in the instance just mentioned, or unmarked in Greek and Hebrew script.

Golden 2005: 210–211 would like to read the title spelled as *b'k* in mss. of al-Iṣṭaxrī and Ibn Ḥawqal not as an unusual spelling for *bäg* but as *yilig* / *yelig*, and relate it to Old Turkic and Qarakhanid *elig* 'king', mainly because 13th century and later sources explicitly write *ylk*. Mistaking *yā* for *bā* is very common in Arabic mss., but the emendation of *alif* to *lām* is a bit more daring. Golden sees his view supported by the name of the late 9th century Hungarian ruler Árpád's son, which his near-contemporary Porphyrogennitos spelled as Ιέλεχ; but the Hungarians could, I think, have copied that from Bolgar as well (beside the possibility of this proper name having a quite different source). If Golden should be right

[58] Kïpchak languages do have it, Chuvash does not!

[59] Similarly, Mongolic *nilbusun* 'tear' and *čilayun* 'stone' are (I think rightfully) considered to be cognates of Turkic *yāš* 'tear' and *tāš* 'stone' respectively.

about proposing *yelig*,[60] this would be a Bolgarian-type onset for Khazar. It could then be that Khazar turns long /ä/ into a diphthong but not long /a/; this would not be like Bolgar-Chuvash either,[61] but like Yakut.

Golden 2005: 208 states that *Ïtax*, "while showing the *-aq*/*-ak* suffix found in many Oğuro-Bulğaric forms (. . .),[62] lacks, at least in this anthroponym, the *i-*/*ɪ- > yi-*/*yɪ-* shift that one finds in Oğuro-Bulğaric (. . .) and is apparent in the Khazar title *yilig*/*yélig*". While Khazar *yelig* would accord with the Bolgar diphthongising of Proto-Turkic /e/ to give /iä/ (e.g. in *yäl* 'community' > Chuvash *yal* 'village' from Proto-Turkic *el*,[63] or *biäl+* < *beš* 'five'), Volga-Bolgarian (like Yakut) did not diphthongise short or long /i/ or /ï/ (cf. Erdal 1993: 149–150, 152–3).[64] Actually, then, this name fully accords with what one would expect from a language element in the Bolgar-Chuvash group.

(e) *The palatalization of /s/*

Another term not included in Golden 1980 but clearly belonging to the Khazar realm is the name of a river in an 8th or 9th century account of the Crimea, written in Greek as Χαρασίου and translated as μαῦρον νερόν, that is 'black water'; see Róna-Tas 1976: 166–7 and 1982: 152 with references. I would suggest reading this as *xara sïw* (*w* symbolising a semi-vowel; not a voiced fricative, for which Greeks would use *beta*); since [š] cannot be written in the Greek alphabet (nor is pronounced as such by normal Greeks), the reading *xara šïw* would also be possible for Khazar. That the final labial element (spelled ου) should be syllabic (as proposed by Róna-Tas 1982: 152) is unlikely especially if the stress on the ί was in the original source.[65] The word for 'water' is *suw* in all early

[60] '*Yilig*' would not be expected, as */e/ becomes *iä* > *yä*; see the next paragraph.

[61] Cf. however Volga Bolgarian *jāl* 'year', mentioned above.

[62] Chuvash *uyăx* 'moon' and *xĕlĕx* 'horse hair' compared to their Common Turkic cognates and synonyms *ay* and *kïl* indeed show that that branch of Turkic made more use of °*k* suffixes than other Turkic languages; the Volga Bolgarian word for 'month' (< 'moon') also already ends in /x/. These suffixes may, however, have been borrowed from Iranian and may not come from Proto-Turkic.

[63] Found also in Mongolic as a not so early borrowing.

[64] Cf. Volga Bolgarian *hir* 'daughter' corresponding to Common Turkic *kïz* (both words with long vowels) and *xïrx* 'forty' corresponding to *kïrk*, both with short vowels. Chuvash does indeed place prosthetic /y/ also before onset /i/ (as in Chuvash *yïtă* 'dog' mentioned by Golden, whose source also happens to have had a short vowel) but this appears to be a later development.

[65] Thus in Moravcsik 1958: 340.

Common Turkic but *šïv*, with an unrounded vowel, in Chuvash. In the Volga Bolgarian inscription from the year 1307 dealt with by Róna-Tas 1976 a river is called *šïw*, as in the 8th/9th century account; cf. also Erdal 1993: 128–9. Would the non-labial vowel in the word for 'water' speak for an assignment of Khazar into the Bolgar-Chuvash branch? Not necessarily: The Khazar form of this word is identical with the shape the word 'water' must have had in Proto-Turkic, as shown in Erdal 1991: 177; the labial consonant must have rounded the vowel secondarily, as happened in many Old Turkic words.[66] Had there been any positive evidence for Χαρασίου to be pronounced with [š], a grouping with Bolgar *would* have to be assumed, as no other early Turkic language shows this phenomenon (though Classical Mongolian does). In any case there was, in this very area, a Great Bolgarian Empire, which dissolved around the year 670. This river name could very well have been inherited from the earlier, in this case at least partially Bolgarian, population of the area; river names, and toponyms in general, often do get handed down from inhabitants to inhabitants.

(f) *The palatalization of /t/*

The Khazar name for the river Volga and for a city on its banks was Ätil; the /t/ was not replaced by /č/ even though it was followed by /i/. I am not aware of any Khazar word in which /t/ did get palatalized. Volga Bolgarian *altı* 'six' and *älti* 'wife of imam' as well as the 3rd person preterit suffix when appearing as *-ti* show that that language did not generally palatalise /ti/; this actually happens only in a few of the epitaphs. That the Khazars did not do that in the river's name therefore does not disqualify their language from Bolgar status. The Chuvash phenomenon of t > č before /i/ etc. may either be younger, or it may have characterised only a part of the Chuvash-Bolgar group.

(g) *The loss of final voiceless velars*

At the end of his 2005 paper, Golden writes: "The shift -q / -ğ > -x > -h > 0, typical of Oğuro-Bulgaric . . ., seems to be a feature of Khazar as well."

[66] Bashkir *hïv* 'water' (spelled and pronounced with a non-labial vowel) is, I think, likelier to come from a Volga Bolgarian substrate rather than having survived from Proto-Turkic times; other explanations are possible as well. If the Volga Bolgarian word for 'water' had come from **sū*, one would have expected it to have a falling diphthong, as e.g. **üč* 'three' becomes *weč*.

The only case where Golden seems actually to refer to such a loss in this paper is, however, in shapes which the name of the Päčänäk tribe appears to get in the sources; that, however, is not a Khazar word. I am not aware of any evidence for such a loss in Khazar. On the other hand, the attested Volga Bolgarian language material does not show this phenomenon either. So, it may be a coincidence that there is such loss both in Mongolic and in Chuvash (unless it occurs exactly in the same words); alternately, only a part of this branch of Turkic (which also had had contact with the Mongols) could have shown it. A third possibility is that our limited Volga Bolgarian corpus does not show this phenomenon although the language did have it.

B evidence

We showed above why the absence of the sound change *d* > *r* is no proof that Khazar was of the Common Turkic type, even if it is in evidence in such an early Bolgar source as the 10th century Nagyszentmiklós bowl inscription in Greek characters (where the *-dOk* suffix appears with onset *r*).

Can the sound change #x < [#q] shown at the beginning of *xara* 'black' help us classify Khazar (if indeed *xara sïw* is not inherited)? Another Khazar word starting with #xa is the name of the city *Xamlïx*, for which two possible etymologies were mentioned above; beside, of course, the name of the nation itself. The onset 'stop > fricative' sound change is typical of Chuvash and in full evidence in 13th–14th century Volga Bolgarian *hir* 'girl', *xyan* 'blood' and *xïrx* 'forty' (Erdal 1993: 115). However, this sound feature appears also in early Qïpchaq: e.g. in pronominal *xayda* and *xačan*, and *xal-* 'to remain' or *xayïš* 'leather strap' in the Codex Comanicus (just mentioning cases where the following vowel is /a/).[67] Kāšġarī (fol. 541) says that the Oguz and Qifčāq say *xayu* 'which' instead of the "Turks'" *qayu* and *xïzïm* 'my daughter' instead of *qïzïm*. According to Róna-Tas 1982: 163, the fivefold mention of the term *xaδïŋ* 'birch tree' (< Old Turkic *kadïŋ*) by Ibn Faḍlān, the caliphate's ambassador to the Volga Bolgarians, is evidence for 10th century Volga Bolgarian #xa-. Ibn Faḍlān, however, uses this term first when describing the section of his itinerary between the lands of the Oguz and of the

[67] Róna-Tas (personal communication), comparing Hungarian *hal* and Finnish *kala* (both 'fish'), points out that fricativization might be an areal phenomenon: The Hungarians lived in this area before moving further West. Cf. also Róna-Tas 1993: 295–6.

Pecheneg (fol. 202b), before reaching the Bashgird and, in May 922, the Volga Bulgarians; it therefore cannot serve as certain evidence for the language of these latter.[68] As shown in Erdal 2004: 75–78, the fricative realization of the back allophone of /k/ was possible and is attested in Old Turkic as well, though evidence is in many ways far from clear. Early Mongolic does not generally fricativize the back velar voiceless consonant, although parts of it do (see Doerfer 1965, introduction).

q > *x* at the end of a word is attested in *Ïtax*, the Khazar personal name interpreted in Erdal 1991a as coming from *ït* 'dog' plus the diminutive suffix *-Ak*. The same sound process is, indeed, attested in Volga Bolgarian *xïrx* 'forty', *t(i)w(ï)x(+čï)* 'chicken (seller)' and the personal name *Amrax* (< *amra-k* 'dear') attested as a proper name also in Anatolia (Erdal 1993: 115). On the other hand, however, *x* appears in variants of forms with *q* in the Codex Comanicus (e.g. *yox* 'there isn't', *yolux-* 'to meet' or *yarux* ~ *yarïx* 'bright, light'; so this is—again—no proof by itself.

So what is the result of the application of the mentioned criteria for the classification of Khazar? The criteria (a), (e), (f) and (g) and B evidence are all inconclusive; the application of the (b) criterion would speak against the inclusion of the language of the Khazars into the Bolgar-Chuvash branch, especially if *čavïš-yïgar* is the correct reading for a word for which nothing convincing has been proposed otherwise. (c) is inconclusive unless this same term is taken into consideration, and this term would tend to speak against it. With (d) there might be conflicting evidence if Golden is right with his proposal to read a title spelled as *b'k* as *yelig*; if this idea is rejected, evidence is against inclusion. Summing up all this, one would state that overall evidence would be slightly *against* the *inclusion* point of view. However, there could also have been different Khazar dialects with isogloss profiles differing in points of which we are, at present, able to detect only a few: Perhaps there was a diachronic, contact-related development towards, or away, from the Bolgar branch; or perhaps, finally, Khazar occupied intermediate positions with respect to these isoglosses.

---

[68] Cf. Togan 1939: 211–215. In a personal communication, Prof. Róna-Tas points out to me that Ibn Faḍlān got his data from his interpreters and not from the people he met, and "that a Bulgar was in the embassy". In view of other evidence on the fricativization of the onset back-vowel velar, the presence of a Bulgar member in the group cannot guarantee that the name of a tree had an exclusively Bolgar shape, to the exclusion of other possible sources for Ibn Faḍlān's rendering.

4. *The* geniza *mss. Cambridge T-S (Glass) 12.122 and T-S Misc. 35.38*

Let us now turn to Golb & Pritsak 1982, which contains Golb's edition of two medieval Hebrew mss., one a plea to help a certain Jew who had gotten into material troubles, the other an account of a part of Khazar history seen from a Jewish perspective. What invites our scrutiny is Pritsak's 'Altaistic' commentary to the edition of the two mss., and historical notes based on his opinions on the 'Altaic' words he purported to have discovered. The texts are presented in the work as new sources disclosing unknown Khazar language material. Most reviews about this book were written by Judaists or by specialists of Eastern European history, who took Pritsak's competence in historical Turkic linguistics for granted. Not that everybody agreed with all aspects of Golb's interpretation. S. Schwarzfuchs, e.g., pointed out two problems:

Firstly, that the Hebrew text actually does not say "we, the community of Kiev, inform you of the troublesome affair" etc., as translated by Golb, but "we inform you, the community of Kiev, of the troublesome affair . . .".[69] It would seem, therefore, that the letter was not sent *from* Kiev but *to* Kiev, putting all conclusions drawn from it concerning the Khazars and the history of Kiev on very shaky feet. It might then be appealing to the community of Kiev for help by mentioning that other Jewish communities were also being called upon to do so. Below we actually mention one linguistic reason why the letter may have been sent from a place where the language spoken was *not* Khazar.

---

[69] This is the meaning of מודיעים אנו לכם קהל של קייוב (*modiʿim anu laxem kahal šel Kiyov*), which Golb (p. 6) calls "troublesome" and a "seemingly peculiar syntactic structure"; this is quite normal Hebrew, however, unless one tries to make it mean what it does not mean. Golb's arguments (spread over half a quarto page) against the straightforward interpretation (that the letter was *addressed to* the community of Kiev) can be summed up as follows: 1) "The letter contains pleas for aid . . . addressed to all 'holy communities scattered to all (the world's) corners . . ., and one does not find in the Genizah circular letters of this kind addressed to Jewish communities in general, which thereafter single out a particular community." 2) The bearer of the letter evidently ended up in Fusṭāt, (the name of old Cairo) and not Kiev. 3) Formulating the sentence so as to give the intended meaning would have been "quite inadmissible in Hebrew literary style", because "proper Hebrew sentence structure . . . calls for the verb in the initial position". The first and second arguments cannot override what the text actually says, though we do not know why the ms. ended up in Egypt; that there is nothing similar in the Cairo Geniza may just be a coincidence. The third argument is clearly not true: While classical Hebrew style prefers the verb to be in initial position, one would not do that at the price of getting the wrong meaning across.

The second problem which Schwarzfuchs had with the text was the idea that proselytes could be *kohanim* and *leviim*, appellatives which are believed to be inherited in patrilinear fashion since biblical times.[70] The "sacerdotal metamorphosis" of *kam*s (Turkic shamans) to *kohanim* of which Golb (p. 32) speaks would, I believe, be unparalleled in Jewish history and seems quite unlikely to me. The conclusion would be that the document's signatories (or their fathers mentioned within their patronyms) who have non-Jewish names would not be Khazars converted to Judaism but Jews who adopted non-Jewish names. We know that this happened everywhere and quite a lot since antiquity, e.g. with the name *Kalonymos*, which is a Greek compound. This is also the view held by Torpusman (1989: 51), a specialist in East European onomastics who dealt with the names; he quotes several examples for Eastern European Jews bearing non-Jewish names throughout history.[71] In his opinion, the non-Jewish names of this document are likely to be Slavic and not Turkic; this would again, I think, make the Khazars vanish from the letter. Orjol 1997 has shown that one of the names, if not two, is indeed Slavic.[72]

Golden 1984: 481 says he is "disturbed by the lack of any but the most skimpy data" for Pritsak's reconstruction of Kievan history. He further points at a 110 years' period between the person supposed to be the 'wazīr' of Kiev in 940–950 and his father, whom Pritsak believes to have been active in 833, and tries to solve the problem by assuming a patronym to be a clan name. On the same page Golden states that "the appearance of the runiform inscription in the Kievan letter, regarded by Golb & Pritsak as an official stamp of approval by Khazar authorities, necessitates, in light of the dating of the document, a new chronology for Kievan Rus' history. . . . This constitutes a very substantial revision of the chronology of the *Povest' vremennyx let* . . .".

[70] DNA research of recent years has been said to show with a very high degree of certainty that extraneous elements among Jewish *kohanim* are as low as 0.5%. Much of the controversial discussion around this topic is reflected in the internet site http://www.khazaria.com/genetics/abstracts.html.

[71] I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Peter Golden, who made Torpusman's paper (as well as his own review of the book) available to me.

[72] Erdal 1993: 133 (footn. 237) already points out that nothing in the text indicates that its authors were Khazars.

4.1. *The 'runiform'* recognitio

The attention of the review article of Ligeti (1981) is mainly directed towards a short note appearing at the very end of one of these texts: a sequence of what can, by and large, be interpreted as Eastern Turkic runic characters, by Pritsak read as *hokurüm* and translated as 'I have read'. The interpretation of this *recognitio*, although placed into an admittedly plausible textual and historical context, is not without problems: The last character of the word is far from being a normal runiform *m*, which would have to consist of two pairs of parallel lines meeting on the right edge of the letter; the character could also be read as a front *k*, giving *ök* or *ük* for the third syllable of the word. Furthermore, the first character is only hypothetically taken to be the ligature of a Semitic *he* with the runic character for *o* or *u* which is in fact reminiscent of a *wāw*. For this character, Pritsak refers to a sign appearing in the fragment of a lapidary, written in runiform characters and published by Thomsen, 1910. Thomsen finds this to be an Aramaic *he* used as the numeral '5' (as still done nowadays, e.g. in Hebrew). What could have a shape similar to the numeral in Thomsen's 'Blatt' is the whole of the first character in the last word of the Geniza ms., however, and not just its rightmost half; under that comparison of letters the reading therefore ought to be *hakurüm* and not **hokurüm*.[73] Ligeti 1981: 12 expresses his expectation of *a* in the first syllable not on palaeographical grounds, as I do, but on comparative grounds. The word has been quoted over and again by Turcologists, who agree that it shows the passage from *d* to *r* typical for the Bolgar-Chuvash branch of Turkic. I have pointed out (Erdal 1993: 133) that *hoqu-* would, if it has been read correctly, fit in well with the prehistoric reconstruction of the verb *oqï-* 'to call out, recite, read'.[74]

In case the letter should have been sent *to* Kiev, as the Hebrew text actually says, and not *from* Kiev, it could, e.g., come from the Danube Bolgar realm which flourished on the lower Danube till the 10th century. In that case the censor's note would be evidence for Bolgar and not for Khazar! We should add that the 7th century Khazar word *tudun*

[73] Actually, the vertical line on the right side of the first character looks much weaker and lighter than the rest of it; if it is just an accidental stain of the parchment, this first syllable would have to be read as *äl*. In sum, among the six runiform signs, only the third one is wholly beyond doubt.

[74] Ligeti is doubtful of the *h*, expecting a *w* instead if the language was of the Bolgar-Chuvash type; I am not, in view of the early date of Khazar.

had not changed intervocalic *d* to *r*;[75] Khazar may possibly never have carried out this sound change. This would be further indication against Khazaria as source of the letter if, again, the reading *r* can be upheld.[76] In Danubian Bolgar, on the other hand, *d* should have become *r* already in the first half of the 9th century, if my interpretation of the Nagyszentmiklós inscription in Greek letters (Erdal 1988) is correct. The Danube-Bolgarian state may possibly have been the realm from which the letter was sent, as it apparently wasn't sent from Kiev. Volga Bolgarian /d/ > /r/ is documented for 1230 (the title *turun* mentioned in a Slavic chronicle) and directly attested in the late 13th century, and I take this phonetic change to be a common Bolgarian feature: That it should have taken place among different Bolgarian groups at different points in time seems to be less likely.[77] If one directly connects the change to /z/ evidenced by Hungarian *búza* < Turkic *buγδay* 'wheat', this would indicate that the Hungarians either borrowed this term at a still earlier date, or that it came from a Turkic language which had not changed the voiced dental to /r/ at least after /g/.[78]

Ligeti 1981: 17 points to a third circumstantial problem arising from the 'Khazar hypothesis' (in addition to the two problems brought up by Schwarzfuchs): He asks whether it could be considered a mere coincidence that on a Hebrew letter of the Khazars the *recognitio* (analogous to *legi* 'I have read' on Latin documents; similarly in Byzantine sources) is not worded in the language of the letter. "Everything", he says, "points to the existence of a Hebrew language chancellery with the Khazars; . . . on the basis of the available information it seems hardly likely that a Khaz-

[75] There are a number of examples in Greek sources and one in an Armenian source, all referred to in Golden 1980: 215.

[76] Golden's (1984: 477) doubts concerning the reading of this word are also related to the chronology of the *d* > *r* shift, but then the reading need not be doubted if the text is not Khazar anyway.

[77] The ablative suffix *+rAn* first appears in a Volga Bolgarian inscription dated to 1281, *erne küen* 'Friday' < Persian *ādīna* 'Friday' + Turkic *kün* 'day' in one from 1297; see Erdal 1993. I have stated above why Ibn Faḍlān's use of *xaδiŋ* cannot serve as evidence for Volga Bolgarian.

[78] *toγdak* is usually taken to be the source of Hungarian *túzok* 'bustard', thus giving another possible *-z-* < *-γd-* change. Concerning this word one should, however, consider that it is, in fact, not attested before the Bābur-nāme: The original Turkic word for bustard is *tōd*, first documented by Kāšġarī, who says that it is pronounced as *toy* by those Turks who change [d] to [y]. *toγdak* might, in view of its late attestation in Turkic, have been adopted from Mongolic, where it appears in a number of dialects. Hungarian *nyögér* < *nöker* 'comrade', e.g., shows that it was perfectly possible for Mongolic loans to reach Hungarian.

arian language chancellery would ever have functioned alongside with, or prior to it." We might add that Jews have, up to the 20th century, used the Hebrew alphabet also when writing all the other languages they spoke throughout their history, Aramaic, Syriac and Neo-Aramaic, Ottoman Turkish, Krymchak and Karay Turkic, Persian, Arabic, Greek, Italian, French, Yiddish and their variety of Spanish (Judezmo). The chancellery of the Jewish state of the Khazars is therefore also likely to have used Hebrew writing even if the official language was a Turkic one. The letter ought to have originated in a different state, therefore, one not having adopted a monotheistic religion. If the runiform expression was "an official stamp of approval" by "authorities" of a different country, no revision of the accepted chronology or the known course of history becomes necessary.

4.2. *The proper names in the Geniza documents*

The only Turcologist who cared to comment on Pritsak's treatment of the non-Semitic names and appellatives in Hebrew characters appearing in the two medieval Hebrew documents edited by Golb appears to have been Golden; others may not have taken Pritsak's seemingly erudite linguistic speculations, which unfortunately very often bent and twisted information to suit the argument, quite seriously. Golden's (1984) review article, invited by the *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*[79] is rather critical though treading quite carefully in its wording. It raises a number of important points not touched upon in the present paper; I will deal only with a few of these words which are relevant to linguistic matters.

Among the signatories of the first letter, the account of Golb & Pritsak (1982: 40) for the name יוסף בר קופין (*ywsf br* [= son of] *qwfyn*) must unfortunately be called unserious: Pritsak states it to be identical with the name of the Kuban river, called ο Κωφῆν ποταμός by the 6th century Byzantine author Menandros Protector and, further, to the name of a Bolgar tribal group which, in the 7th century, roamed the territory between the river Don and the Caucasus, called *Kup'i Bulgar*. Why somebody should bear the name of a tribe and/or of a river is not stated: The 'explanation' is exclusively based on sound similarity.[80]

---

[79] This journal was not otherwise concerned with the Turkic world though it was close to Prof. Pritsak—who was a Ukrainian activist in the United States.

[80] By the way, Pritsak uses the name of the Kuban river also in his account of a word read as עבם (*'βm*) in the second text, which was previously edited by Schechter. עבם

Another one of the signatories is שמשון יהודה המכונה סורטה (*šmšwn yhwdh hmxwnh swrṭh*). Pritsak derives this last word from the name of the Sabirs which, he says, were actually called *Säwär, Säbir* or *Sävir*.[81] The last two letters (ט *ṭ* and ה *h*) he assigns to a suffix *-tei* which he finds in the "Bolgarian" name *Bülertei* referred in Jusupov 1960: 106[82] and in Mongolian. The suffix *+tAi* is, indeed, very common in Mongolian, where it corresponds to the Turkic suffix *+lXg*. It does not, however, exist in Turkic (though it is, of course, found in some names of Central Asian places now inhabited by Turks); even if the Turkic and the Mongol language families should, in the future, prove to be related (as some scholars think they are), it would still not be admissible to try to interpret a Turkic word as containing this suffix unless one should assume borrowing. Such borrowing would, of course, be possible from the 13th century on, when the Mongols overran Eastern Europe. This also means that the Volga-Bolgarian and the Kïpchak inscriptions (which are included in Jusupov 1960 alongside each other) could have shown this suffix, as they were inscribed under Mongol rule. This flaw in Pritsak's reasoning, the 'solution' of early Eastern European riddles through recourse to Mongolian, is common to many of his imaginative etymologies. In the relevant centuries Mongols are, I think, unlikely to have moved outside the zone extending from Southern Manchuria and Northern Mongolia.[83] The presence of any Mongolian population in Eastern Europe or in the Caucasus should not be assumed for this time, and the possibility of a genetic connection between the two language

---

must be the name of a political entity: It is mentioned in one series with the name *Maqedōn*, no doubt referring to the Byzantine empire which was, throughout the 10th century, reigned by the Macedonian dynasty. The word can, I think, hardly receive any interpretation, as it is preceded by a lacuna and corresponds to no known name. Pritsak, undaunted, says that the *ʿayin* was "erroneously used for Persian *ghayin*, which in turn was used to render foreign *q*. The name", he adds, "was not Persian in origin but taken over by the Persians from the Kuban Bulgars." He further states that it was a typical feature in the Huno-Bolgarian group", as he calls the Chuvash-Bolgar branch, "that the final *n* after labials develops into *m*. Therefore," according to him, "it becomes clear that עבם of the Schechter text goes back to an original *Qubam, (< Quban)." There are *so* many unwarranted a*d hoc* assumptions in this line of thought that it would be a great waste of space and time to discuss them.

[81] See n. 2 on p. 35 of the book for references to works explaining whom Pritsak actually had in mind, and Golden 1992: 104–106 for further information about this tribe.

[82] Jusupov actually reads the name as *Būlārtāj*, as the vowels are spelled with *wāw* and *alif* respectively.

[83] Janhunen 2003: 391–2 is, I think, the most recent qualified summary of what can be known about the earliest groups speaking Mongolic or 'Para-Mongolic' idioms.

groups does not warrant the transference of linguistic elements beyond what can be reconstructed as common heritage. As it is, three other explanations for this word are much more likely: One of these is connecting it with the people called Σάβαρτοι ἀσφαλοι by the 10th century Byzantine emperor and author Konstantinos Porphyrogennitos, *Sevordik'* in Armenian and *Sawardiyah* in Arabic sources, who have been identified with the Hungarians by Berta 1992[84] and should not be confused with the Sabirs.[85] Orjol 1997 proposes an 'emendation' of the word leading him to a Slavic name. However, no emendation is necessary: The expression המכונה (*hmxwnh = ha-mexune*)[86] makes us expect a כנוי (*kinuy*), a nickname, and not some national affiliation; this is the only appearance of מכונה (*mexune*) 'nicknamed' in the text. Looking at the word without Altaic preconceptions, I would suggest reading it as Germanic: *swartä* means 'the black one' i.e. 'the dark one' in Gothic and in early Scandinavian.[87] I feel this to be quite a viable proposal, considering the Gothic and Rus' presence of long standing in that part of Eastern Europe. Some Gothic was, after all, spoken on the Crimea even in the 16th century (as documented by Ghislain de Busbecq, French ambassador to Istanbul in 1555–62), when this and all other Eastern Germanic languages had long died out everywhere else.

Let us now turn to another non-Semitic patronymic, that of גוסטטא בר כיבר כהן (*gwsṭṭ' br kyβr khn*). Pritsak (pp. 36–37) connects this with *Kavaroi*, the name of a tribe which, according to Porphyrogennitos, joined the Proto-Hungarians somewhere on the Pontic steppe, and further with a word appearing in the Arabic translation of the *Sefer Yosippon*.[88] According to that book, one of the sons of *Togarma*, the son

[84] He analyses this as *sav*, which he takes to come from *sag* 'right', + *art* 'the back side' + 3rd person possessive suffix, and translates the whole phrase as 'Hinter-dem-rechten-Flügel', i.e. 'behind the right wing'. Such an analysis is, I think, unlikely in Turkic, as a postposition signifying 'behind' would not be *art+ı* but *art+ın+da*. The phrase consisting of the three elements postulated by Berta might instead signify 'the back part of the right one'. Moreover, there is no evidence that the sound change *ay* > *av* had already taken place at such an early date.

[85] The interpretation of this term in Bata 1996 is not less acceptable than Berta's, and probably less adventurous.

[86] The two are from the same verbal root, *mexune* being the present passive participle, *kinuy* a verbal noun.

[87] Cf. e.g. *den sorte* 'the black one' in Danish; in standard Modern German the final *t* of the stem has turned into an affricate, giving *der Schwarze*.

[88] The original (ed. Flusser 1978–1980) was written in the 10th century in Sicily or in Southern Italy.

of *Japheth* (i.e. in Genesis!), was called *Turki*, or, in some mss. of the *Sefer Yosippon, Turk*. Pritsak says that Harkavi 1874: 300 noted that one of the mss. of an Arabic translation of this book replaces this *Turk(i)* by a word written as כביר (thus, *kβyr*!). This form Pritsak wants to read as *Ḵiábar*, which would contradict all orthographic practice; this, in turn, he takes to be the patronymic found in the Hebrew letter, and also the source of the patronymic *Yuvārī* found in one or perhaps in two of the Volga Bolgarian grave inscriptions (Erdal 1993). Early **Kāvar*, with a long vowel in the first syllable, would indeed give **Kyavar* in Volga Bolgarian, but *Yuvārī*, which we have there, cannot go back to such a form: **Kyavar* would give *Yuvar* in Modern Chuvash but not in Volga Bolgarian. So Pritsak commits several philological and linguistic errors: He mixes up the stages in the development of a language by an error of about 500 years; he proposes an arbitrary change in the reading of a manuscript from which he did not have an edition but only saw a stray quote; the ms. which he refers to, without mentioning when it might have been written, is only the translation of a source which, itself, has the name of the eponymous ancestor of the Turks; this obscure ms. variant is, finally, taken to have been adopted as somebody's proper name, although such a practice is not known to have existed.

So much for the name of גוסטטא בר כיבר כהן 's father. Pritsak assumes *-ta*, the last syllable of the proper name of גוסטטא 'the *kohen*' himself, to be the same Mongolian suffix which he thought he had already identified at the end of סורטה (*swrṭh*). This Mongolian suffix means 'having' (like English *-ed* in words like *bearded* or *spectacled*) or, as Pritsak wanted his readers to believe, "belonging to". The first part he identified as the name of a Pecheneg governor in the 9th century, called Κώστας, as quoted again by Konstantinos Porphyrogennitos. The reason the name of the ruler (whom Pritsak calls 'governor') was in the document spelled with a *g* and not with a *k* was, he says, that Greek used the letter *gamma* to express fricative *gh* and not a stop; the *s*, he adds, was dropped because of the suffix. Κώστας is, of course, a very common Greek name, as Moravcsik, Pritsak's source, states; the final *s* is the Greek nominative suffix: This is the shortened variant of Κωνσταντίνος, the name borne by the emperor and author himself. **Kostata* must in fact have been the intermediate form between these two stages of Greek historical development, subsequently shortened by haplology; Orjol 1997 shows that the variant with initial *g* is, indeed, attested as a Slavic name in the 11th–12th centuries. In this case, then, Pritsak could be right in having mentioned the name of the Pecheneg ruler; he was only unaware

of (or disregarded) its Greek and, of course, ultimate Latin origin. We already stated above why the Mongolic suffix *-tA(i)* is unlikely to have appeared here; the notion that it could have been added to a personal name to form another personal name is in any case quite unnecessary, as the two-syllable variant must have had a three-syllable predecessor. Torpusman 1989 points out these and other internal contradictions in Pritsak's position and quotes this and similar names from Slavic sources of the 9th–17th centuries. He has a different, Slavic etymology for the name, as being an **-ent-* derivate from *gost'* 'guest'; this etymology is just as convincing as the Greek one.

The two other proper names of this document which Pritsak attempts to explain are מנס (*mns*), which appears as a patronym, and מנר (*mnr*), the name of one of the signatories himself. Both of these start with the sequence מנ (*mn*) which, according to Pritsak, represent the word *man*, meaning 'great' (a word dealt with by Prof. Róna-Tas in several papers). *MNS*, Pritsak (p. 40) says, "transmits Altaic (Bolgarian group) /äs/, also with the meaning 'great', as attested, for example, in the title *Attila* (< *Äs-tila*). In the Chuvash language the form *mănas* (< *mān äs*) is attested in fact." However, there is no *mănas* in Chuvash; only *mănaś*, which means 'proud' or 'haughty', and Chuvash /*ś*/ never comes from *s*. Chuvash does have a noun *as*, which indeed comes from Common Turkic *äs*, but it means 'mind, remembrance'. As to be expected, Pritsak's etymology for the name of Attila, first proposed in 1956, has not gained acceptance;[89] his suggestion for *MNS* is equally imaginary. *MNR*, finally, is supposed to be read as *Man är*, which would mean 'great man'. This is the only one among Pritsak's proposals for the first document which *might* be acceptable, although the expression 'great man' is hardly attested as a proper name. Even in the case that *Man-är* is a correct explanation of the name and is Khazar, that also does not help us much towards deciding what sort of a Turkic language the Khazars spoke: The word *man* does today survive mainly in Chuvash, but once was in use in other Turkic languages as well.

[89] It is generally agreed (as set forth by such authorities on the Huns as Otto Maenchen Helfen) that the name is a Germanic diminutive, also attested e.g. as the name of an Anglo-Saxon bishop.

4.3. *The 'Khazar' words in the Schechter document*

The Khazar words in the second document, before Golb & Pritsak edited also by Schechter and then Kokovcov, are discussed already in Golden 1980. Most of Pritsak's interpretations of non-Khazar elements in this second Hebrew text, names of places, nations and states, are doubtful as they involve arbitrary emendations, but do not concern us here. What does concern us are those cases where he invoked Bolgar-Chuvash language history, Hunno-Bolgar as he called it, to support his etymologies. First, the name of the Khazar city of *Xamlïx*, which was somewhere on the lower Volga (perhaps near its estuary on the Caspian Sea), where the Khazar ruler used to take a tithe from merchants using the river: Pritsak (p. 153 ff.) disqualified previous accounts, one of which is the derivation from *xan balïx*, 'the ruler's city' (over an assimilated **Xambalïx*); another possible etymology proposed by Róna-Tas is mentioned above. Pritsak instead suggested deriving the name from the early Slavic designation of the Caspian, which was *Xvalis'skoe More*. *Xvalis'* was, he believed, a compound, consisting of *As*, the name of an early Central Asian people mentioned in the sources, plus *Xvali*. Since the Turks did not have the cluster *xv* initially, he stated, they changed this name to *Xali*, added the 'Altaic' collective suffix *+an*, giving **xalin*; then, according to sound laws documented in Chuvash, they dropped the *l* before the *n* and then changed this final *n* to *m*, giving *Xam*. Again, there are numerous errors here; the dropping of /l/ in Chuvash must be a recent phenomenon, e.g., which was in any case more recent than the emergence of final *m* where the other Turkic languages have *n*; the collective suffix *+an* is rare in Mongol as it is in Turkic, is nowhere added to foreign words and is not productive in Bolgaro-Chuvash.[90]

Another case where Pritsak was led astray by the Altaic hypothesis is the shape of the name of the city *Sarïgšïn*. He first (p. 152) arbitrarily proposed a reading *Sarïgčïn* with the argument that the Arabic script uses *šīn* to write the sound [č],[91] then assigned the last syllable to a Mongol feminine suffix, added to Turkic *sarïg* 'yellow'. In fact, while early

[90] Concerning "**hap-balïy*", another Pritsakian creation, Ligeti 1981: 11 after elaborate argumentation says: "This hypothesis is not defendable".

[91] The sound /tʃ/ did not exist in Arabic; since Arabs did not pronounce this sound, they had no need to write it either. When it occurred in words they borrowed, they often simplified it to /ʃ/ i.e. *š*, which then also appears in the spelling of their borrowings. There is no reason to believe in the existence of such a process among speakers (and writers) of other languages.

Mongolian did distinguish gender, no early Turkic ever did; this happens to be an important typological difference between these two language groups. The Turkic suffix *+šIn* is always used with colour words: Cf. Turkish and Azeri *sarışın* 'blonde'; Korkmaz 2003: 66 also mentions *akşın, gökşin, karaşın* and *mavişin*. *kökčin* 'greyish, greybeard', frequently attested in the *Qutadgu Bilig*, no doubt comes from the same formation: *kökšin* 'bluish, greenish' is attested twice in the DLT.[92] Since *+šIn* is in fact attested as a Turkic suffix, there is no need to involve Mongolic for the explanation of this name.

Summing up, etymologies trying to explain Khazar lexemes and suffixes by offering wholly *ad hoc* sound processes and taking any language from any period of the Altaic world to be a possible source are unacceptable. Unfortunately, Golb & Pritsak 1982 does not make any direct contribution to knowledge of the Khazar language, although a part of the material made available in exemplary fashion definitely is an important base for further research on Early East European Jewry. Thus, our only hope for getting more information about the Khazar language and its status among the Turkic languages remains the decipherment of the rich inscriptional evidence, a task on which all scholars interested in the question should now concentrate.

The article has tried to document all views expressed on the famous "Kievan letter". One interpretation of this Geniza document which came to the author's attention only recently is that by the important Hungarian scholar János Harmatta in his paper 'A magyarok nevei a görög nyelvű forrásokban' [The names of the Hungarians in Greek sources], which appeared on pp. 119–40 of the volume *Honfoglalás es nyelvészet* edited by L. Kovács and L. Veszprémy (Budapest 1997). On pp. 136–138 of this paper, Harmatta proposes the reading QHNWB´ (a well-documented place name in Egypt) for the damaged word read as QYYWB´ and interpreted as the old name of Kiev by Golb and Pritsak, and locates

[92] The sound change š >č after consonants is a typical Qarakhanid development, found e.g. in *kïrčal-* < Old Turkic *kïršal-* (< *kïr(ï)š+a-l-*), *yapčïn-* and *yapčur-* from *yapïš-*, *kikčür-* < inscriptional *kik-šür-*, the adverb *tutčï* < *tut-š- ï*, *tapčur-* from *tap-ïš-* etc.; cf. on the other hand Kāšġarī's *kül-sir-* 'to smile' where all other early sources have *külčir-* instead. Laude-Cirtautas 1961 further mentions *borčïn* as a name for grey (*boz*) animals as well as *karalčïn* ‚blackish' (< *kara* 'black') and *kubalčïn* 'pale' (< *kuba*) in Kïrghïz, but these terms might have been borrowed from Mongolic: The suffix is there added to attributive adjectives also showing that the head is female (e.g. *xara+ġcin morin* 'black-she horse' = 'black mare').

the whole event narrated in the letter in Egypt (where the manuscript was found). He interprets the witnesses' names, considered to be Khazar by Pritsak, as Iranian, Greek and Egyptian, and reads the note added at the end, which Pritsak considered to be in runiform script, as North-African rabbinical cursive. This latter point is one on which specialists of North-African rabbinical cursive should express their opinon.

Bibliography

Bajčorov, S. Ja., 1989: *Drevnetjurkskie runičeskie pamjatniki yevropy. Otnošenie severokavkazskogo areala drevnetjurkskoj runičeskoj pis'mennosti k volgo-donskomu i dunajskomu arealam*. Stavropol.

Bata, George L. 1996: 'The Turks who were called ΣΑΒΑΡΤΟΙ ΑΣΦΑΛΟΙ'. *Journal of Turkish Studies* 20: 177–187.

Bazin, Louis, 1981–82: 'Pour une nouvelle hypothèse sur l'origine des Khazar'. *Materialia Turcica* 7–8: 51–71.

Benzing, Johannes, 1959: 'Das Hunnische, Donaubolgarische und Wolgabolgarische'. Deny, Jean (et al., eds.), *Philologae Turcicae Fundamenta* vol. 1, Aquis Mattiacis.

Berta, Árpád, 1992: 'Die chasarische Benennung der Ungarn'. Chr. Fragner & K. Schwarz (eds.), *Festgabe an Josef Matuz. Osmanistik—Turkologie—Diplomatik*, Berlin, pp. 7–11.

—— & András Róna-Tas, 2002: 'Old Turkic loan words in Hungarian'. *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 55: 43–67.

Clark, Larry V., 1978: 'On a Chuvash development of **-d-*'. *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 32: 371–6.

Dankoff, R. in collaboration with J. Kelly (eds. and transl.), 1982–4: *Maḥmūd al-Ḳāšγarī. Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīwān Luγāt at-Turk)*. Parts I–III. Harvard University Printing Office.

Doerfer, Gerhard, 1965, 1967: *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente in Neupersischen* vols. 2–3, Wiesbaden.

Erdal, Marcel, 1988: 'The Turkic Nagy-Szent-Miklós inscription in Greek letters'. *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 42: 221–234.

——, 1991: *Old Turkic Word Formation. A Functional Approach to the Lexicon*. 2 vols. Wiesbaden (*Turcologica* 9).

——, 1991a: 'Ein unbemerkter chasarischer Eigenname'. *Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları* [1]: 31–36.

——, 1993: *Die Sprache der wolgabolgarischen Inschriften*. Wiesbaden (*Turcologica* 13).

——, 2004: *A Grammar of Old Turkic*. Leiden (*Handbook of Oriental Studies* 8, 3).

Fedotov, M.R., 1996: *Etimologičeskij slovar' čuvašskogo jazyka*, Čeboksary.

Flusser, David, 1978–80: *Sefer Yosippon*. 2 vols., Jerusalem.

Garkavi, A.J., 1874: 'Skazanija jevrejskix pisatelej o Xazarax i xazarskom carstve'. *Trudy Vostočnogo Otdelenija Imp. Arxeolog. Obščestva* 17.

Golb, Norman & Omeljan Pritsak, 1982: *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*. Ithaca.

Golden, Peter B., 1971: 'Hazar dili'. *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı. Belleten* 147–157.

——, 1980: *Khazar Studies*. 2 vols. Budapest.

——, 1984: 'A new discovery: Khazarian Hebrew documents of the tenth century'. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 8: 474–486. Review article on Golb & Pritsak 1982.

——, 1992: *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*. Wiesbaden (*Turcologica* 9).

——, 2002–2003: 'Khazar Turkic ghulâms in caliphal service: Onomastic notes'. *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 12: 15–27.
——, 2005: 'Khazarica: Notes on some Khazara terms'. *Turkic Languages* 9: 205–222.
Hauenschild, Ingeborg, 2003: *Die Tierbezeichnungen bei Mahmud al-Kaschgari. Eine Untersuchung aus sprach- und kulturhistorischer Sicht.* Wiesbaden (*Turcologica* 53).
Helimski, Eugene, 2000: 'On probable Tungus-Manchurian origin of the Buyla inscription from Nagy-Szentmiklós (preliminary communication)', *Studia Etymologica Cracoviensia* 5: 43–56.
——, 2000a: 'Jazyk(i) Avarov: Tunguso-Mančžurskij aspekt' *Studia in honorem Stanislai Stachowski dicata. Folia Orientalia* 36: 135–148.
——, 2003: Tunguso-mančžurskij jazykovoj komponent v Avarskom kaganate i slavjanskaja etimologija: Materialy k dokladu na XIII Meždunarodnom s'ezde slavistov. Hamburg.
Janhunen, Juha (ed.), 2003: *The Mongolic Languages*. London.
Johanson, Lars, 1983: Review of Golden 1980, in *Acta Orientalia* 44: 232–236.
Jusupov, G.V., 1960: *Vvedenije v bulgaru-tatarskuju epigrafiku.* Moskva-Leningrad.
Kljashtornyj, S.G., 1991: 'Runicheskije grafitti iz Priazov'ja'. Pp. 111–116 in: *Varia Eurasiatica. Festschrift für Professor András Róna-Tas.* Szeged.
Korkmaz, Zeynep, 2003: *Türkiye Türkçesi Grameri (şekil bilgisi)*. Ankara.
Köprülü, M. Fuad, 1963: The entry *çavuş* in the *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 3. cilt, İstanbul, pp. 362b–369a.
Kyzlasov, I.L., 1994: *Runičeskie pis'mennosti jevrazijskix stepej.* Moskva.
Laude-Cirtautas, Ilse, 1961: *Der Gebrauch der Farbbezeichnungen in den Türkdialekten.* Wiesbaden (*Ural´-Altaische Bibliothek* X).
Le Coq, Albert v., 1912: 'Ein manichäisches Buch-Fragment aus Chotscho.' Festschrift Vilhelm Thomsen, Leipzig, pp. 145–154. Appears also in F.W.K. Müller et al., *Sprachwissenschaftliche Ergebnisse der deutschen Turfan Forschung. Text-Editionen und Interpretationen. Gesammelte Berliner Akademieschriften 1904–1932*, Leipzig 1985, pp. 539–458.
Levitskaja, L.S., 1976: *Istoričeskaja Morfologija Čuvašskogo JAzyka*. Moskva.
Ligeti, L., 1981: 'The Khazarian letter from Kiev and its attestation in runiform script', *Acta Linguistica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 31(): 5–18.
Ludwig, Dieter, 1982: *Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches im Licht der schriftlichen Quellen.* Diss. Münster.
Moravcsik, Gyula, 1983: *Byzantinoturcica* [vol.] II. Berlin. 3. durchgearbeitete Auflage.
Munkácsi, Bernhard, 1905: A half-page untitled remark in *Keleti Szemle* 6: 184.
Müller, F.W.K., 1912: 'Ein Doppelblatt aus einem manichäischen Hymnenbuch (Mahrnâmag)'. ABAW. Appears also in F.W.K. Müller et al., *Sprachwissenschaftliche Ergebnisse der deutschen Turfan Forschung. Text-Editionen und Interpretationen. Gesammelte Berliner Akademieschriften 1904–1932*, Leipzig 1985, pp. 151–190.
Németh, Gyula, 1932: *Die Inschriften des Schatzes von Nagy-Szent-Miklós*. Budapest (*Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica* 2).
Orjol, Vladimir, 1997: 'O slavjanskix imenax v jevrejsko-xazarskom pis'me iz Ki'eva'. *Palaeoslavica* V: 335–338.
Róna-Tas, András, 1976: 'A Volga Bulgarian inscription from 1307'. *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 30: 153–186.
——, 1982: 'The periodization and sources of Chuvash linguistic history'. Róna-Tas, András (ed.), *Chuvash Studies*, Budapest, pp. 113–169.
——, 1990: Die Inschrift des Nadelbehälters von Szarvas (Ungarn)'. *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher N.F.* 9: 1–30.
——, 1993: Review of Erdal 1991 in *Journal of Turcology* 1: 291–305.
——, in collaboration with Árpad Berta, Éva Csáki, Éva Nagy, Klára Sándor, 1995: *A Handlist of the Turkic Loanwords in Hungarian.* Ms. Budapest.
——, 1999: 'Chuvash and historical morphology'. *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 51: 1–15.

——, 2005: 'Turkic–Alanian–Hungarian contacts'. *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 58: 205–213.
Rybatzki, Volker, 1994: 'Bemerkungen zur türkischen und mongolischen Metallterminologie'. *Studia Orientalia* 73: 193–251.
Samojlovič, A.N., 1925: 'O slove *gil*'—dom, sem'ja v narečijax peredneaziatskix turkov'. *Jafetičeskij Sbornik*, Z.L.
Schönig, Claus, 2003: 'Turco-Mongolic relations'. Janhunen 2003, pp. 403–419.
——, 2005: 'Lexikalische Schweifzüge'. *Turks and Non-Turks. Studies on the History of Linguistic and Cultural Contacts. Special issue presented to Professor Stanislaw Stachowski on his seventy fifth birthday. Studia Turcologica Cracoviensa* 10, 387–404.
Schwarzfuchs, Simon, 1984: Review of Golb & Pritsak 1982, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 201/4: 432–434.
Sims-Williams, Nicholas, 2000: *Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan, 1. Legal and Economic Documents.* Oxford.
——, 2002: 'Ancient Afghanistan and its invaders: Linguistic evidence from the Bactrian documents and inscriptions'. *Indo-Iranian Languages and Peoples. Proceedings of the British Academy* 116: 225–242.
Tekin, Talat, 1979: 'Once more zetacism and sigmatism'. *Central Asiatic Journal* 23: 118–137.
Tezcan, Semih, 1975: *Eski Uygurca Hsüan Tsang biyografisi. X. Bölüm.* Doçentlik Tezi Ankara.
Thomsen, Vilhelm, 1896: *Inscriptions des l'Orkhon déchiffrées.* Helsingfors.
——, 1910: 'Ein Blatt in türkischer 'Runen'schrift aus Turfan'. *SPAW*, pp. 296–306.
Togan, A. Zeki Validi, 1939: *Ibn Faḍlān's Reisebericht*. Leipzig (*Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* XXIV, 3).
Torpusman, A.N., 1989: 'Antroponimija i mezhetnicheskije kontakty narodov vostochnoj JEvropy v srednije veka'. I. Imja Gost'ata v jevrejskoj rukopisi iz Kieva pervoj poloviny X. veka'. Pp. 48–66 in: *Imja—Etnos—Istorija* (ed. by V.A. Nikonov et al.), Moskva.
Tryjarski, Edward, 2002–4: 'Runes and runelike scripts of Eurasian area'. *Archivum Ottomanicum* 20 (2002): 5–80, 21 (2003): 5–90 and (2004): 173–212.
Vašari (Vásáry), I. 1998: 'O runičeskix sistemax pis'ma Vostočnoj Jevropy. pp. 32–45 in *Altaica II* (ed. by V.M. Alpatov et al.), Moskva.
Vasil'ev, Dmitrij D. 2005: 'The Eurasian areal aspect of Old Turkic written culture'. *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 58: 323–330.
Wilkens, Jens, 2000: *Alttürkische Handschriften Teil 8. Manichäisch-türkische Texte der Berliner Turfansammlung.* Stuttgart (*Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland XIII, 16*).

NEW FINDINGS RELATING TO HEBREW EPIGRAPHIC SOURCES FROM THE CRIMEA, WITH AN APPENDIX ON THE READINGS IN KING JOSEPH'S LETTER

Artem Fedorchuk

The purpose of this article is to examine a number of problems relating to Hebrew inscriptions from the Crimean peninsula (Ukraine). The greatest collections of them are found in two Jewish-Karaite cemeteries: in the *Josaphat valley* outside the "cave-town" of Chufut-Qalʿeh and in Tabana-Dere outside the "cave-town" of Mangup. The article is focused on the problems related to the Chufut-Qalʿeh cemetery.

The history of research in those cemeteries is closely connected to the name of the Karaite collector and archaeologist Abraham Firkowicz (1787–1874) and with the polemics around his discoveries, which arose in the second half of the 19 century. Firkowicz (and, a decade later, Prof. Daniel Chwolson) found a number of epitaphs which were attributed by them to the first centuries of the C.E. The results of his research were published by Firkowicz in his book *Aḇney Zikkaron*[1] in 1872. But these results were called into question by Sh. Rappaport, A. Harkavy, E. Deinard, S. Munk, H.L. Strack, A. Kunik and other scholars, who suspected Firkowicz of having forged all the epitaphs which bore dates earlier than 1240 C.E. and also the colophons on the ancient manuscripts found by him in the Crimea, the Caucasus and the Middle East. According to those accusations, Firkowicz fabricated epitaphs and colophons, especially letters marking the dates, trying to prove the ancient origins of the Crimean Karaites.

We are in no position to describe here all the circumstances of the polemics.[2] But it is important to point out that many defenders of

[1] *Sepher Aḇney Zikkaron li-Ḇney Yisrael*, Wilna 1872.

[2] For different aspects of the polemics, see now: "Evrei-karaimy", *Žurnal Ministerstva vnutrennix del*, 1843, part 1, pp. 263–84 [Russian]; "Drevnie evrejskie kodeksy i drugie nadpisi", *Zapiski Odesskago Obščestva istorii i drevnostej*, Odessa 1844, vol. 1, pp. 640–9 [Russian]; "Evrejskie relegioznye sekty v Rossii", *Žurnal Ministerstva vnutrennix del*, 1846, part 15, pp. 11–49 (reprint in: V. Grigoryev, *Rossija i Azija*, Saint-Petersburg 1876) [Russian]; A. Kunik, "Können die Hebräer in der Krim schon im 3-ten Jahrhundert den

Firkowicz's findings viewed them as sources on the early medieval history of the Northern coast of the Black Sea, including Khazar history. Besides, for many Karaite authors Firkowicz's work became one of the starting points of the so-called "Khazar theory" of the origins of East-European Karaites, although Firkowicz himself had never made such claims.

---

tatarischen Fürstennamen Tochtamysch geführt haben?", *Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale de sciences*. St. Petersbourg 1864; A. Neubauer, "Die Firkowitzsene Sammlung", *Bulletin de l' Académie Impériale de sciences*, St. Petersbourg 1864, pp. 374–8; D. Xvol'son [D. Chwolson], *Vosemnadcat' jevrejskix nadgrobnyx pamjatnikov Kryma*, Moscow 1866 [Russian]; *O sobranii rukopisej i drugix drevnostej, predložennyx gg. Firkovičami v prodažu Imperatorskoj Publičnoj biblioteke,* Saint-Petersburg 1869 [Russian]; A. Harkavy & H.L. Strack, *Catalog der Hebräischen Bibelhandschriften in der Keiserlichen Bibliothek St. Petersburg*, Sankt Peterburg 1875; A. Harkavy, *Altjüdische Denkmäler aus der Krim, mitgetheilt von Abram Firkowitsch*, Mémories de l'Académie Impériale des sciences de St.-Petersburg. VII serie. T. XXIV, No. 1. Sankt Peterburg 1876; O.O. [A.] Kunik, *Firkovič i Toxtamyš*, Sankt Peterburg 1876; D. Chwolson, *Corpus inscriptionum Hebraicarum, enthaltend Grabschriften aus der Krim . . .*, Sankt Peterburg 1882; D. Xvol'son [Chwolson], *Sbornik jevrejskix nadpisej . . .*, Saint-Petersburg 1884 [Russian]; S. Dubnov, "Istoricheskaja taina Kryma", *Jevrejskaja starina*, Moscow 1914, vol. 7, pp. 1–20 [Russian]; A. Fedorchuk, "Iz istorii diskussii o proisxoždenii karaimov (v seredine XIX—načale XX v.)", *Pervaja Molodežnaja Konferencija SNG po iudaike. Sbornik materialov*, Moscow 1997, pp. 47–52 [Russian]; V. Vixnovich, *Karaim Avraam Firkovič*, St. Petersbourg 1997; A. Fedorchuk, "Novye dannye o sobiratel´skoj dejatel´nosti A.S. Firkoviča (epigrafičeskij aspekt)", Vol. 2, Moscow 1999, pp. 43–55; G. Akhiezer & D. Shapira, "Karaites in Poland-Lithuania up to the 18th Century", *Pe'amim* 89 (2001), pp. 19–60 [Hebrew]; D. Shapira, *Abraham Firkowicz in Istanbul, (1830–1832): Paving the Way for Turkic Nationalism*, KaraM, Ankara 2003; D. Shapira (with contributions by M. Ezer, A. Fedortchouk, M. Kizilov), "Beginnings of the Karaites of the Crimea Prior to the Early Sixteenth century", *A Guide to Karaite Studies: An Introduction to the Literary Sources of Medieval and Modern Karaite Judaism*, ed. M. Polliack, Leiden Brill 2003, pp. 709–728; D. Shapira, "The Turkic Languages and Literatures of the Eastern European Karaites", in M. Polliack (ed.), *A Guide to Karaite Studies: An Introduction to the Literary Sources of Medieval and Modern Karaite Judaism*, ed. M. Polliack, Leiden Brill 2003, pp. 657–707; D. Shapira, "Nynešneje sostojanije pripisok rukopisej Pervoj Kollekcii Firkoviča," *Evrejskaja Istorija. Materialy Odinnadtsatoj meždunarodnoj meždisciplinarnoj konferencii po iudaike*, Part 1, Moscow 2004, P. 102–130 [Russian]; D.D.Y. Shapira, "Indeed Ancestral Tombs?—Historical Data and their Modification in the Tombstone Inscriptions of Abraham Firkowicz", *Pe'amim* 98–99 (Winter-Spring 2004), P. 261–318 [Hebrew]; *idem,* "Remarks on Avraham Firkowicz and the Hebrew *Mejelis 'Document'* " *AOASH* 59:2 (2006), pp. 131–180; D. Vasjutinskaja, "Kogda avtorskoe pravo bylo drugim: Avraam Firkovič i *Rehabilitation* otca russkoj gebraistiki Daniila Xvol´sona", *Evrejskaja Istorija. Materialy Desjatoj meždunarodnoj meždisciplinarnoj konferencii po iudaike*, Part 1, Moscow, 2002, pp. 366–376 [Russian]; A. Fedorchuk, "Naxodki i zagadki Avraama Firkoviča", *Vostočnaya Kollekciya* 2 (25), Moscow, 2006, pp. 77–88 [Russian]; A. Fedorchuk, "Notes on the Present State of the Studies of the Chufut-Qal'eh Cemetery, the Crimea", *The Eastern European Karaites in the Last Generations*, ed. Dan D.Y. Shapira, Yad Yitshak Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem 2007 (in press), *Studies in a Karaite Community: Report of the Ben-Zvi Institute Expedition to the Jewish-Karaite Cemetery of Chufut-Qal'eh (the Crimea). A Collection of Papers*, edited by Dan Shapira, Ben-Zvi Institute, Jerusalem 2007 [Hebrew; in press].

On the other hand, although the critics of Firkowicz had pointed to a great number of contradictions in his statements, up to now, despite many doubts about the authenticity of some dates of the epitaphs, there was no direct evidence of Firkowicz's forgeries, and many statements of his critics also contained a great deal of contradictions (the main contradiction was between his supposed acts and his supposed goals).

But now we have new sources which can shed light on some of these problems. In 1998 I found the drafts of *Aḇney Zikkaron* which are kept in Firkowicz's private archive at the Russian National Library (RNL) in Saint-Petersburg (formerly, the Imperial Public Library).[3] Beside many fragments, these are two MSS *in folio* written approximately in 1847–8, one of them[4] earlier than the other,[5] both of them containing several hundred epitaphs collected by Firkowicz in Chufut-Qalʿeh (in topographical order as well as in chronological order), Mangup, Solkhat (Solxat, Eski-Qırım), Eupatoria (Jevpatorija, Gözleve) and Theodosia (Feodosija, Kaffa, Keffe, Capha). Actually, it is a mystery why these documents were neglected by A. Harkavy—who was for half a century the supervisor of Firkowicz's MSS collection at the Imperial Public Library—and by other scholars, because these documents provide us with direct evidence of Firkowicz's forgeries. Moreover, a comparison of these drafts with the published text of *Aḇney Zikkaron* in many cases enables us to understand the way Firkowicz changed the epitaphs or their dates.

The most arrant example of these changes is the epitaph of Esther, daughter of Shelomo, which was often mentioned in the literature on the subject. This is the only epitaph containing a reference to the so called *Matharchean* era. It was, according to Firkowicz, the notion used for the regular era *from the Creation of the World* in the Crimea in the second half of the first millennium of the C.E. (allegedly, this era was borrowed by the Crimean Jews from those living in the city of Matarcha, on the Taman Peninsula as it is called in Russian). According to Firkowicz, it replaced the so called *Ancient Crimean* era, which was allegedly 151 years longer that the regular era *from the Creation*.

The text of the epitaph in *Aḇney Zikkaron* (No 37)[6] is as follows:

[3] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89–120.
[4] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:96.
[5] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89.
[6] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 10.

This is the tombstone on the grave	וזה מצבה של קבורת
of Esther, daughter of Shelomo, which	אסתר בת שלומה אשר
I have put near her head, who died	שמתי מראשותוי שנפטר
in the year 536—may	בשנת ת'ק'ל'ו' תהא
her soul be bound in the bond	נפשה צרורה בצרור
of life—from the Creation,	החיים ליצירה
that is 385 according to the Matarchean [*era*]	הוא ש'פ'ה' למטרכיי

The first to express doubts about this epitaph was A. Kunik.[7] In 1862, when Gabriel Firkowicz (son-in-law of Abraham) had shown him the copy of the epitaph, Kunik told him that, from his point of view, the handwriting changed in the middle of the sixth line. G. Firkowicz agreed and added that they [the Firkowiczes] "hadn't noticed it". Besides, A. Kunik thought that Firkowicz changed the first date from ה'ק'ל'ו', 5136 (*i.e.*, 1376 C.E.) into ת'ק'ל'ו', 536 (*i.e.*, 776 C.E.; or, according to Firkowicz, 625, taking into account the *Matarchean* era) replacing ה by ת (it was the most widespread way of Firkowicz's forgeries). Later A. Harkavy and H.L. Strack expressed similar views regarding this epitaph. Besides, they held that Firkowicz changed ר into ק in the forth line (and that the real date was 1476 C.E.), and also added a line and a half, after the eulogy.

On the other hand, D. Chwolson pointed out that the handwriting did, indeed, change, but in the forth and not in the sixth line.

We are in no position to study the epitaph itself, because it (together with another eight epitaphs) was sawed off by Firkowicz in 1863[8] and removed to the Asian Museum in Saint-Petersburg,[9] where all of them were lost during the World War II. But the version of the epitaph found in Firkowicz's draft gives us the possibility to solve this problem. This is the text of the epitaph in the draft:[10]

---

[7] Kunik 1864; Kunik 1876, 25–8.

[8] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:42. Compare now A. Fedorchuk, "New Data on Firkowicz's Work at the Çhufut-Qal'eh Cemetery", *Studies in a Karaite Community: Report of the Ben-Zvi Institute Expedition to the Jewish-Karaite Cemetery of Chufut-Qal'eh (the Crimea). A Collection of Papers*, edited by Dan Shapira, Ben-Zvi Institute, Jerusalem 2007 [Hebrew; in press].

[9] They were seen there by E. Deinard, A. Kunik, A. Harkavy, D. Chwolson, K.B. Starkova. In the 1860s, they were chemically studied, in order to trace a forgery, cf. B. Dorn und Ad. Goebel, "Über neun dem asiatischen Museum zugekommene Grabsteine mit hebräichen Inschriften", *Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale de Sciences de St.Pétersbourg*, V 1864, pp. 128–146.

[10] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89; f. 46v; No. 582, B 9.33.

וזה מצבה של מַרתַ אסתר בת שלומה אשר שמתי מראשותוי שנפטר בשנת
ת'רַ'ל'ו' תהא נפשו צרורה בצרור החיים ליצירה

This is the tombstone of Mrs. Ester, daughter of Shelomo, which I have put near her head, who died in the year 636—may her soul be bound in the bond of life—from the Creation.

So we can see that the last line (not the line and a half, as Kunik, Harkavy, and Strack held) including the mention of the *Matarchean* era was added to the epitaph by Firkowicz (as well as the change of ר into ק in the date in the forth line; the same change was made in the epitaph No. 38 in *Aḇney Zikkaron*—ת'ר'ל'ז' in the draft[11] and ת'ק'ל'ז' in the book).[12] Let us also point out, however, that some differences between the two versions of the epitaph were simply the results of mistakes made during rewriting (מצבה instead of מצבת, קבורת instead of מרת, and נפשו instead of נפשה), and there were also some mistakes in the epitaph itself (according to the draft): מראשותוי instead of מראשותיו, נפטר instead of נפטרה, and נפשו instead of נפשה (the last one had been "corrected" by Firkowicz in the book).[13]

There are 55 epitaphs in *Aḇney Zikkaron* which, from Firkowicz's point of view, bore the dates which must be calculated according to the *Ancient Crimean* era. But in the drafts the situation is completely different. This era is absent in the earliest one, and in the latest one there are only 11 such epitaphs. These are epitaphs No. 5, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, and 25 in *Aḇney Zikkaron*. Their dates (according to C.E.) in the book and in the latest draft (in the brackets dates according to the earliest draft are given) are as follows: 92 (243), 150 (301), 180 (331), 219 (370), 279 (430), 280 (431), 286 (437), 292 (443), 305 (456), 305 (456), 369 (520). As for the dates of other epitaphs, which were calculated in *Aḇney Zikkaron* according to the *Ancient Crimean* era, in the drafts they were calculated according to the regular Jewish era *from the Creation*. These

[11] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89; f. 54; No. 668, B 13.6.

[12] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 10.

[13] In the summer of 2000, Dan Shapira, Michael Kizilov and the present author found in the Çhufut-Qal'eh cemetery the copy of this epitaph made by Firkowicz on the tombstone after he sawed off the original inscription (surprisingly, according to the map of the cemetery made by Firkowicz (MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1: 122) he made the copy not on the original tombstone, but on the neighboring one, where originally the epitaph of Esther, daughter of Joseph (*Aḇney Zikkaron*, 14, No. 45) had been situated). The copy is almost identical with the version found in the draft (the only difference is that the first date in the copy is תקקלו instead of תרלו in the draft and תקלו in the book, which is obviously a mistake.

are their numbers and dates according to *Aḇney Zikkaron* (in the brackets—dates in the latest draft): No. 29–528 (679), No. 31–549 (680; in the book Firkowicz by mistake changed תמ[14]—(4)440—into תס[15]—(4)460), No. 37–625 (876, see above), No. 38–626 (877, see above), No. 45–643 (794), No. 47–667 (818), No. 48–669 (820), No. 49–669 (780; in the earliest draft—820; in the book[16] and in the earliest draft[17] the date is תקפ—(4)580; in the latest draft[18]—תקמ—(4)540), No. 50–670 (821), No. 51–670 (821), No. 52–674 (825), No. 53–676 (787; in the book Firkowicz by mistake changed תקמז[19]—(4)547—into תקפז[20]—(4)587), No. 56–706 (857), No. 57–706 (857), No. 58–719 (870), No. 62–722 (873), No. 63–726 (877), No. 64–726 (876), No. 65–726 (877), No. 67–726 (877), No. 68–726 (877). The epitaphs No. 6, 7, 10,[21] 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 21, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 41, 46, 54, 59, 66, 69, which in *Aḇney Zikkaron* bear the dates according to the *ancient Crimean* era, do not exist in the drafts.

The dates of the epitaphs No. 34, 36, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 60, 61 and of all the epitaphs beginning with No. 70, are calculated by Firkowicz according to the *Matarchean* era, *i.e.*, the regular era *from the Creation*.

Now we shall turn to the so called era *from our exile* which, according to Firkowicz, began in 696 B.C.E. (he regarded this date as the date of the exile from Samaria).[22] There are only five epitaphs in the *Aḇney Zikkaron* referring to this era. Four of these five epitaphs were, according to Firkowicz, the oldest ones in the cemetery (No. 1–702, No. 2–726, No. 3–751, No. 4–785, and also No. 25–1065). The epitaphs No. 4 and No. 25 bear the dates *from the Creation* (the *ancient Crimean* one, from Firkowicz's point of view) as well, that enabled Firkowicz to calculate the difference between the two. In the drafts there is only one of them, which, as Firkowicz wrote, was dated back to the 6 C.E. and so was the

[14] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89; f. 48; No. 602, B 10.19.
[15] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 9.
[16] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 15.
[17] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:96; p. 217; No. 586.
[18] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89; f. 47v; No. 597, B 10.14.
[19] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89; f. 45v; No. 571, B 9.22.
[20] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 15.
[21] This epitaph, as well as the epitaph No. 3, was found by Firkowicz in 1865. See MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:123.
[22] However, Firkowicz hesitated regarding the exact value of this date and was calculating it differently in different periods of his life. For the evidence of Firkowicz's own disbelief in this era, cf. D. Shapira, "From 'Our Exile' to Sichem: Abraham Firkowicz visits the Samaritans", *Cathedra* 104 (June 2002), pp. 85–94 [Hebrew].

most ancient one in the cemetery (although Firkowicz gave other dates for this epitaph elsewhere). In the book it looks as follows:[23]

זאת ציון בוקי	*This is the sign of Buqi,*
בן יצחק כהן נ'ע'	*son of Isaac Kohen, may he rest in Eden.*
עת ישועת ישר	*Time of the deliverance of Israel,*
אל שנה ת'ש'ב'	*year 702*
שנים לגלותנו	*from our exile*

In the latest draft the primary version of this epitaph is as follows:[24]

. . . של יצחק כהן נ'ע' . . . שר אל שנה ת'ש'ב' . . . שנים לגלותנו

. . . of Isaac Kohen [may he rest in Eden] . . . [. . .]srael, year 702 from our exile.

After the epitaph there is a marginal note in which Firkowicz wrote that he had read the epitaph this way in 1846, but in 1856 he had made a paper cast ("after the request of the academicians from Saint-Petersburg", as he wrote) and had been able to read more.[25] Then the text comes, which we can see in the book. Besides, the date according to the Common Era, indicated on the margin, was obviously changed from 147 (we have no idea how to explain this figure) into 6.

As for the second epitaph which bears the date according to the era *from our exile*, it does not exist in the earliest draft, and in the latest one we can find it out in the chronological list only, while in the topographical list there is a lacuna in place of the epitaph, although there is the date 30 on the margin. But, under the marginal note mentioned above (which follows after the epitaph of Buqi) Firkowicz for some reason wrote the text which was later included by him into the *Aḇney Zikkaron*. The epitaphs No. 3[26] and No. 4 (in the book) are absent in the drafts. As for the epitaph No. 25,[27] it contains only the date from the Creation, while the date *from our exile* doesn't exist in the version of this epitaph presented in the drafts.

Thus, we can come to the conclusion that all these eras were actually made up by Firkowicz, and became a part of his "system of antiquities."

[23] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 2.
[24] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89; f. 54, No. 663, B 13.3.
[25] I am thankful to Prof. S. Iakerson who helped me to read this marginal note.
[26] See note 21.
[27] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89; f. 46 f., No. 579, B 9.30.

One of the most important arguments of Firkowicz's advocates was the fact that after his death D. Chwolson (in 1878 and 1881) and N. Babalikashvili (in 1980s) had found in Chufut-Qal'eh a number of epitaphs supposedly belonging to the seventh—thirteenth centuries (Chwolson) and to the tenth-eleventh centuries C.E. (Babalikashvili), which were not included in the *Aḇney Zikkaron*. But some of these epitaphs (20 out of 40 published by Chwolson and 2 out of 9 published by Babalikashvili) were found in the drafts, so the argument that Firkowicz never saw them and had no possibility to fabricate the dates, does not hold water.

Here is, for example, the epitaph, which was, according to Chwolson, the most ancient one (save for several fragments) found by him and not previously found by Firkowicz. As Chwolson thought, it was dated back to 613 C.E.:[28]

David *4373* *from the Creation*	דוד דא שעג ליצ

In Firkowicz's drafts there is an epitaph, which is almost identical with this one:[29]

דוד . . . דא שנג ליצ

This epitaph is dated back to 593 C.E., but this kind of confusion, as a confusion of ע and נ, which we can see in the date, is quite understandable.[30]

Let us also look at one of the epitaphs discovered by Babalikashvili:[31]

This is the tombstone *of R. Abraham, may his memory be blessed, son of R. Isaac,* *the elder, may he rest in Eden; died Thursday,* *year 757 from the Creation,* *may his soul be bound in the bond of life.*	זאת המצבה של ר' אברהם ז'ל ב'ר' יצחק הזקן נ'ע' שנפטר יום ה' שנת ת'ש'נ'ז' ליצירה ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

[28] Chwolson 1884, 229, No. VI.

[29] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89; f. 48, No. 600, B 10.17.

[30] The copy made by Chwolson on the tombstone is found now at the cemetery and looks as follows: דוד ד'א' ש'צ'ג' ליצ'.

[31] N. Babalikašvili, "O neskol'kix jevrejskoyazyčnyx karaimskix nadpisjax iz Chufut-Kale", *Semitologičeskie Študii*, Tbilisi, 1987, vol. 3, p. 8 [Russian].

In Firkowicz's drafts we can see the following epitaph:[32]

זה הציון של ר' אברהם ז'ל' ב'ר' יצחק הזקן נ'ע' שנפטר יום ה' שנת
ת'ש'נ'ז' ליצירה ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

It is almost identical (save for two words) with the epitaph published by Babalikashvili.

All these examples are direct evidence that Firkowicz did forge the Crimean epitaphs. But we could not find in the drafts a single fact that would confirm the most important accusation, namely, that Firkowicz changed ה into ת and so made the epitaphs 600 years older that they were. It was stated that the bulk of Firkowicz's forgeries were accomplished using this simple technique. However, the examples quoted here prove that Firkowicz did make corrections in a number of epitaphs, having changed the dates and having built on that ground his "system of antiquities".

* * *

However, the final answer to the question of the correct dating of the inscriptions and the scale of changes that Firkowicz made to the epitaphs could not be given until the total documentation of Chufut-Qal'eh cemetery was completed. This task has been fulfilled by a scholarly group organized by the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies, which carried out between 2004 and 2006 several epigraphic expeditions to the Crimea. The catalogue of the cemetery is presently being prepared for publication.

The actual situation at the cemetery of Chufut-Qal'eh is the following: the total number of inscriptions is approximately 7,000 (or quite close to Firkowicz's estimate of 1847); of these, approximately 3,400 have epitaphs, many of which (mainly late ones, of the 18th and 19th centuries) are quite extensive.

The oldest epitaphs at the cemetery date back to 1364 (the monument of Manush, the daughter of Shabbetai) and to 1387. The former is one of three epitaphs which survived from the 14–15th centuries and were not "corrected" by Firkowicz, and it appears in *Aḇney Zikkaron* as No. 288[33] under the genuine year 1364:

[32] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:89; f. 14v, No. 209, A 7.14.
[33] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 73.

This is the tombstone	וזה המצבה
on the grave	של קבורת
of Manush, daughter	מנוש בת
of Shabbetai, may	שבתי תהא
her soul be bound	נפשה צרורה
in the bond of life,	בצרור החיים
in the year 51	בשנת ה'ק'
24 from the Creation	כ'ד' ליצירה

As for the inscription of 1387, only the lower part of it has been preserved; including the altered date:

Abraham	אברהם
in the year 547	שנת ת'ק'מ'ז'
from the Creation	ליצירה

A comparison with Firkowicz's book leads us to assume that this inscription is probably that of Sarah, daughter of Abraham (*Aḇney Zikkaron, No. 41*),[34] which, taking into account the altered ה and the *ancient Crimean* era, is dated in the book to 636.

Unfortunately, the inscriptions on other monuments of the 14th century can no longer be read due to their poor condition, although some of them can be identified on the basis of the map of the cemetery, which was made by Firkowicz in the mid-19th century and is preserved in his private archive.[35]

At present in the cemetery there are also 24 epitaphs of the 15th century and approximately 60 from the 16th century (by comparison in all the Jewish cemeteries of Western Ukraine only 20 epitaphs of the 16th century have been preserved, the oldest one [from 1521] being in the city of Busk), as well as approximately 400 inscriptions from the 17th century. The majority of inscriptions date to the 18th and 19th centuries. The most recent burials at the cemetery took place in the mid 20th century although regular burials there ceased at the end of the 19th century, when the city was finally abandoned.

Out of 26 surviving tombstone inscriptions of the 14th–15th centuries (7 of them were preserved only in copies made by Firkowicz and

[34] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 12.
[35] MSS Dep. of RNL, 946:1:122.

Chwolson in place of epitaphs that had been sawed out). All but one (Isaac Kohen, 1477) appear in Firkowich's *Aḇney Zikkaron*. However, he dated the large majority of them (22) to much earlier periods. Out of the 564 inscriptions in *Aḇney Zikkaron*, more than half has survived.

From the surviving epitaphs one can obtain a complete picture of how Firkowicz altered inscriptions.

The basic method of alteration used extensively by Firkowicz was quite simple and consisted in adding one short horizon line to the letter ה which numerically signifies 5000. The addition of that single extra line transforms ה into ת, which numerically signifies 400, hence, an inscription becomes 600 years older. In most cases changes of this kind can be discerned by the naked eye.

As an example, let us take the epitaph of Hanukkah, the son of Mordechai (*Aḇney Zikkaron*, No. 64).[36]

זה המצבה של	*This is the tombstone of*
חנוכה בן מרדכי	*Hanukkah, son of Mordechai,*
נ'ע' תהא נפשו	*may he rest in Eden, may his soul*
צרורה בצרור	*be bound in the bond*
החיים והיתה	*of life and may*
מנוחתו כבוד	*his rest be honored,*
בשנת ת'ר'ל'ז'	*in the year 637*
ליצירה	*from the Creation*

The deceased was buried in the year 5237 from the Creation, i.e. 1477 C.E. Changing the letter ה into ת transforms the date to 637 from the Creation (according to the "defective calculation"), but since 5637 corresponds to the year 1877 C.E., which had not yet arrived at the time that his book was published, Firkowicz dated the inscription to 877. In the final version of the book Firkowicz dated it, as he did with many other early epitaphs, even earlier (to 726), calculating this date according to the *ancient Crimean* era. Nevertheless, even quite recently, the epitaph of Hanukkah has been cited in the works about Khazar history (where the name Hanukkah is linked with the same name noted in the letter of Joseph King of the Khazars).

As for the earlier mentioned era *from our exile*, out of the five epigraphs in which this term allegedly appears only one copy is preserved,

[36] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 19.

made on the place of the sawed tombstone inscription of the same Buqi, son of Itzhak Kohen.

In some epitaphs the date is indicated not in a linear manner but by the *chronostichs*, most commonly by Biblical excerpts, some letters of which are marked (usually by dots above the letters). The date is found by combining the numerical values of the marked letters. In a number of cases Firkowicz added additional dots to the *chronostich* in order to alter the date by several centuries. For example, in the epitaph of Abraham, the son of Simkhah (*Aḇney Zikkaron*, No. 86),[37] he put an additional dot over the letter ש so that the date "moved backwards" from 1573 to 873.

Sometimes Firkowicz did not make changes in the date itself but simply, in cases when the date was indicated according to the "defective calculation", changed the millennium in the book. For example, the epitaph of Jacob, the son of Josef, who died in 1535 (the text indicates the year 295 from the Creation of the world) is dated by Firkowicz to 535 (*Aḇney Zikkaron*, No. 30).[38]

Occasionally, Firkowicz required a more inventive correction of the text to change the date. Unfortunately, the majority of inscriptions which allegedly belong to the fifth millennium and where the date is indicated in words or letters have not been preserved. However, a number of the examples show how the dates were altered. For example, in the 1430 epitaph of Mordechai, the son of Daniel the letter ה (signifying 5000), is transformed by the alteration of its lower vertical part into the two-letter combination דל (signifying 4000) (*Aḇney Zikkaron*, No. 17).[39]

Very seldom Firkowicz seems to chisel completely new tombstone inscriptions, especially short ones. These, for example, were the cases with the famous epitaphs of "Itshak Sangari" (the original inscription was sawed off) and "Sangarit",[40] and, most likely, with the epitaph of Buqi, the son of Itshak Kohen. Several epitaphs published in *Aḇney Zikkaron* apparently did not exist in the cemetery but appeared either in the book or in the drafts.

---

[37] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 25.
[38] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 9.
[39] *Aḇney Zikkaron*, p. 5.
[40] Cf. D. Shapira, "Yitshaq Sangari, Sangarit, Bezalel Stern, and Avraham Firkowicz: Notes on Two Forged Inscriptions", *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 12 (2002–2003), pp. 223–260); a Russian version in: *Materialy po arxeologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii* 10 (Simferopol' 2003), pp. 535–555; "Yitshaq Sangari, Sangarit, Bezalel Stern and Avraham Firkowicz: The History of Two Forged Inscriptions," *Paralleli* 3–2 ,הקבלות (Moscow 2003); pp. 363–388 [a slightly different Russian version].

So now, when we know exactly the real dates of all Chufut-Qalʿeh epitaphs, we can say that they certainly cannot be viewed as authentic sources on Khazar history in any respect.

APPENDIX
Some Readings in the King Joseph's Letter

Another manuscript kept in the Manuscript Department of the Russian National Library is the so called *Long Version* of the Reply of the Khazar King Joseph to Hisdai ibn Shaprut. That manuscript [Heb. II B–157] was found by Firkowicz somewhere in the Middle East. It was published twice: in 1879 by A. Harkavy[41] and in 1932 by P. Kokovtsov.[42] It should be added that in 1871 D. Chwolson published the contents of the *Long Version* at a Orientalist conference in Russia, but N. Murzakevič, a veteran scholar of Crimean antiquities, protested vigorously, claiming that the texts that came through Firkowicz's hands are suspicious.[43] After Kokovtsov very few scholars turned to the study of the manuscript itself.

In 1999 I made a brief paleographic survey of the manuscript with the kind assistance by Prof. Shimon Iakerson to whom I am very grateful. According to Prof. S. Iakerson's opinion, the manuscript effectively belongs to the 13th century, exactly as Kokovtsov thought. I compared the manuscript with the text published by Kokovtsov and realized that his publication was close to being exact. Nevertheless, I have found several mistakes in Kokovtsov's publication. Some of them seem to be just errata, but occasionally Harkavy's readings seem to me more plausible. In both cases, I think that all these mistakes should be revised in a new edition of the manuscript.

But, there is something else that has not been noticed by the previous publishers of the text, namely several erasures in the manuscript. One of them had been called to notice already in the nineteenth century

---

[41] מאסף גדחים, No. 8 (January, 1879), pp. 117–123.

[42] P. Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska v X veke*, Leningrad 1932.

[43] In the summer of 2004, Ms. Daria Vasyutinski and Dr. Dan Shapira found, at the Jewish Department of the Vernadsky Ukrainian National Library, items belonging to the personal archive of Avraham Harkavy. One item is a thick notebook in Russian and Hebrew containing Harkavy's remarks on Firkowicz's manuscripts. In one place Harkavy refers to the Long version and the geographical names mentioned there, hinting that Firkowicz might have reason to not call attention to this text. And indeed, after the 1871 incident Firkowicz did not attempt to have it published.

by A. Harkavy and D. Chwolson—the changing of the last letter in the name which now looks like מאנכופ (with the common—initial and middle—form of פ instead of the final one, ף) and which, very likely, was originally מאנכת [page 51 line 13 word 4 in the MS and page 31 line 20 words 6 in Kokovtsov's edition].

But, in the same list of the Crimean localities which were, according to Joseph, under his rule, the manuscript has two additional erasures: one at the end of the name כרץ (which renders Kerč) and at the beginning of the name סוגראי—instead of סוגדאי, which renders Sugdaya, now Sudak) [page 51 line 12 words 5–6 in the MS and page 31 line 19 words 12–13 in Kokovtsov's edition], and the other one—in the name אלוביכא (which renders Alupka) [page 51 line 13 words 2 in the MS and page 31 line 20 word 4 in Kokovtsov's edition]. It is very difficult to imagine the reason for these erasures, because they seem to be absolutely meaningless, but they do exist.[44]

[44] In summer 2004, Dr. Dan Shapira found at the Jewish Department of the Vernadsky Ukrainian National Library items belonging to the Firkowicz Personal Archive. Among them was an edition of the Long and Short Versions of the King Joseph's Letter, prepared by A. Firkowicz (with the Short Version given according to the Warsaw edition, 1864, and containing, in the Long Version, the opening poem by Menahem Ben Saruq). Here are the names of some localities, in the Long Version, according to how Firkowicz wanted them to be read: שרכל, סמכרץ, כריץ, סוגדא, אלוס, למבט, ברתנית, אלופיכא, כות, מאנכופ, בירק, אלמא.

THE CONVERSION OF THE KHAZARS TO JUDAISM

Peter B. Golden

The Khazar conversion to Judaism, an unusual, but not unique occurrence, must be viewed within several larger contexts. The broadest of these was the conversion of the nomadic, steppe peoples to one or another of the universal religious systems (Judaism, Christianity, Manichaeism, Islam or Buddhism). This was a process that was sometimes, but not exclusively, associated with the further growth and articulation of state structures. Although a divine mandate to conquer and rule was often part of the Eurasian nomads' imperial ideology, they did not create any of the great world religions. For these they turned to the sedentary cultures with which they came in contact. Indeed, this is a further example, it has been argued, of their dependence, in the spheres of both material and spiritual culture, on sedentary society. Their choice of religion often grew out of very immediate, "mundane (rather) than spiritual considerations," combined with "sound political sense." Conversion of the elites, especially the ruler, almost always preceded large-scale conversions.[1]

A somewhat narrower context is that of the struggle by the great agrarian empires of the medieval Mediterranean world to win over to their respective faiths the "heathen barbarian" peoples to their north. More concretely, this meant the struggle of Western and Eastern Christendom and the Muslim Caliphate to convert the Germanic, Slavic and Altaic

[1] See A.M. Khazanov, "The Spread of World Religions in Medieval Nomadic Societies of the Eurasian Steppes" in M. Gervers, W. Schlepp (eds.), *Nomadic Diplomacy, Destruction and Religion from the Pacific to the Adriatic* (Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia, 1, Toronto, 1994), pp. 11–15 and his "World Religions in the Eurasian Steppes: Some Regularities of Dissemination" in G. Bethlenfalvy et al. (eds.), *Altaic Religious Beliefs and Practices. Proceedings of the 33rd Meeting of the Permanent Altaistic Conference, Budapest, June 24–29, 1990* (Budapest, 1992), pp. 197–201. On the course of various religions among one Eurasian, Turkic, nomadic, tribal confederation, see P.B. Golden, "Religion Among the Qıpčaqs of Medieval Eurasia" *Central Asiatic Journal*, 42/2 (1998), pp. 180–237.

steppe peoples. The fourth century conversion of the Goths to a moderate form of Arian Christianity through the activities of Ulfilas,[2] was the first of several attempts by Constantinople to reach beyond the Danube using bilingual and bicultural agents. Evaluations of Byzantine success in the Pontic steppes vary. Moravcsik proclaimed Byzantine conversion activity in eighth century Khazaria "remarkably successful." Although Christian communities could be found in the steppe and immediately adjoining areas of the North Caucasus, successes were sporadic and do not appear to have resulted in mass conversions.[3] In this light, Noonan has recently suggested that Byzantium, in fact, did not fare particularly well here.[4] One interesting example, of some relevance to the Khazars, is that of the so-called "North Caucasian Huns," a subject people of the Khazars. In 682, according to Movsês Dasxuranc'i, the Albanian ruler Varaz Trdat sent the Albanian (Ałuanian) bishop Israyêl to the "Huns" to bring them into the Christian fold. The ruler, Ałp Iłuťuêr (Alp Elteber),[5] a son-in-law of the Khazar Qağan, "and his army" were converted. The policy was pronounced a success and the Huns were duly proclaimed "allies."[6] We know nothing of the subsequent fate of Christianity among the North Caucasian Huns. Khazar-led attacks into Albania, however, were still a commonplace in the early eighth century.

The Alans, an important element of Byzantine diplomacy in Western Eurasia, provide a further illustration of the difficulties. According to al-Masʿûdî, their rulers, previously pagans, had converted to Christianity "during the reign of the ʿAbbâsids." After 320/931–2, however, they drove out the bishops and priests sent to them by Byzantium and abjured

---

[2] This was initially, but not exclusively, the work of Ulfilas, a man of non-Gothic, or mixed Gotho-East Roman origins, see R. Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion From Paganism to Christianity* (New York, 1997), pp. 72–77; P. Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 60–61, 85, 90–91, 131, 312–217.

[3] Missionary activity began as early as the mid-fourth century, stemming from Armenian, Armeno-Caucasian Albanian, Georgian and Byzantine sources, see Gy. Moravcsik, "Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars in the Period of Their Migration" *The American Slavic and East European Review*, 5 (1946), pp. 29–45; D. Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches im Licht der schriftlichen Quellen* (Münster, 1982), I, pp. 318–325; M.G. Magomedov, *Obrazovanie xazarskogo kaganata* (Moskva, 1983), pp. 158–172.

[4] Th. Noonan, "Byzantium and the Khazars: a Special Relationship?" in J. Shepard, S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy* (Aldershot, 1992), pp. 120–121.

[5] This is a common title of a subordinate ruler in Turkic polities, see G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), p. 134; P.B. Golden, *Khazar Studies* (Budapest, 1980), I, pp. 147–150.

[6] Movsês Dasxurančı, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, trans. C.J.F. Dowsett (London, 1961), pp. 153–171.

that faith.[7] Christianity had greater success in the Slavic lands, imposed, initially, by force of arms in Turko-Slavic Balkan Bulgaria and through a combination of diplomacy, charismatic missionary leadership (Cyrill and Methodius and their followers) and military pressure elsewhere.[8]

Islam was also not inactive in Western Eurasia. The ʿAbbâsid Caliph al-Ma'mûn (813–833) composed a work to answer the questions of the ruler of the *Burğar* regarding the Islamic faith. Although there is some debate over the identity of these *Burğar* (Danubian-Balkan or Pontic-Bosporan),[9] Islam subsequently found a warm reception among the kindred Volga Bulğars whose leader converted in the early tenth century.[10] In the Eurasian steppe world and in Eastern Europe, the Khazar conversion was one of the first, coming sometime after the embrace by the Uyğur Qağan (762) of Manichaeanism, but before the conversion of the Balkan Turkic Bulğars (864) and the Slavs of Central and Eastern Europe.

As with mass religious conversions elsewhere, leadership was almost always provided by the rulers themselves and often had to overcome domestic resistance. In the first Türk Empire (Eastern Qağanate: 552–630, 682–742, Western Qağanate: 552–659, ca. 699–766), early rulers such as Muğan (553–572) and his successor Taspar (or Tatpar, 572–578) were interested in Buddhism as were their kinsmen in the Western Türk Qağanate, the progenitor of the Khazar state.[11] These were, apparently,

---

[7] Al-Masʿûdî, *Murûj aḏ-Ḏahab wa Maʿâdin al-Jawhar*, ed. C. Pellat (Beirut, 1966–1979), I, pp. 228–229.

[8] See A.P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom* (Cambridge, 1970); F. Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs* (New Brunswick, 1970), C. Bowlus, *Franks, Moravians and Magyars. The Struggle for the Middle Danube 788–907* (Philadelphia, 1995).

[9] An-Nadîm, *Kitâb al-Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, J. Roediger (Leipzig, 1871), I, p. 111; B. Dodge (trans.), *The Fihrist of al-Nadîm* (New York, 1970), I, p. 254. For the Bosporan identification, see O. Pritsak, "The Role of the Bosporus Kingdom and Late Hellenism as the Basis for the Medieval Cultures of the Territories North of the Black Sea" in A. Ascher et al. (eds.), *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern* (New York, 1979), pp. 6–7.

[10] See the account of Ibn Faḍlân, the secretary of the caliphal mission sent to Volga Bulğaria in 921–922: A.Z.V. Togan, *Ibn Faḍlân's Reiseberich* (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, 24/3, Leipzig, 1939).

[11] See S.G. Kljaštornyj, V.A. Livšic, "The Sogdian Inscription of Bugut Revised" *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 26/1 (1972), pp. 78–79; Liu Mau-tsai, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T'u-küe)* (Göttinger Asiatische Forshungen, 10, Wiesbaden, 1958), I, pp. 36–38, 43; J.-P. Roux, *La religion des Turcs et des Mongols* (Paris, 1984), pp. 25–27. As for the Western Türks, Buddhism was already a presence in the Kušan and Hephthalite states, the principal hegemons in the region prior to the Türk take over, see B.A. Litvinskij, *Vostočnyj Turkestan v drevnosti i rannem srednevekov'e. Êtnos, jazyki, religii* (Moskva, 1992), pp. 427–431.

largely personal conversions which did not have a profound impact on society. Subsequently, when Bilge Qağan (716–734) proposed building Buddhist and Taoist temples, Tonyuquq, his Chinese-educated advisor, argued forcefully against it, noting that it was the mobility of the Türks, unencumbered by immovable property, which gave them their military advantage.[12]

Similar arguments would be advanced in later Turkic-nomadic societies by those who were fearful of the lure of urban life.[13] In the Činggisid era, settlement in the cities was viewed as a crime against Činggis Qan's *Yasa*.[14] Conversion to a universal religion in the steppe invariably involved close contact with urban elements, a program that was not always attractive to the nomadic rank and file. The Ṣûfî wandering out into the steppe was far more effective in bringing Islam to the Turkic nomads than the learned 'ulamâ' of the cities.[15]

The third context in which the conversion should be viewed is the local one. What were the events and who were the personalities, if they can be determined, that brought about the conversion? And finally, we must assess the legacy of the conversion. Was this an ephemeral event or did it set in motion long-term changes?

In his study of cross-cultural contacts in Eurasia, Jerry Bentley notes that "there is no single dynamic" that can be used to explain the "process of large-scale conversion in pre-modern times." Similarly, there could be more than one reason for conversion, going beyond immediate "spiritual or cultural advantages." Bentley discerns three broad patterns that come into play: "conversion through voluntary association; conversion induced by political, social, or economic pressure; and conversion by assimilation." As conversion often brought with it considerable, sometimes even radical changes in a variety of human activities, legal, social,

---

[12] Liu, *Die chineschischen Nachrichten*, I, pp. 172–173, 224.

[13] Maḥmûd al-Kâšγarî, *Dîwân Luγât al-Turk. Compendium of the Turkic Dialects*, ed. trans. R. Dankoff in collaboration with J. Kelley (Cambridge, Mass., 1982–1985), II, p. 103; see also Clauson, *ED*, pp. 453–454, referring to the sedentary Tats (Iranians), recorded the saying: *qılıč tatıqsa iš yunčır, er tatıqsa et tınčır* "If a sword rusts, (a man's) work weakens, if a man/warrior adopts Iranian habits, his flesh becomes putrid," On nomad-sedentary relations, see A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Cambridge, 1984, 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, 1994).

[14] V.V. Bartol'd (W. Barthold), *Dvenadcat' lekcij po istorii tureckix narodov Srednej Azii* in his *Sočinenija* (Moskva, 1963–1977), V, p. 173.

[15] M.F. Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (2nd ed., Ankara, 1966), pp. 13–15; Bartol'd, *Dvenadcat' lekcij* in his *Sočinenija*, V, pp. 68–69.

culinary, sartorial, linguistic, it is difficult for the historian to reconstruct the motivation for such a change.[16]

Conversion accounts, whose task is to instruct and strengthen the faith of the newly converted, do not necessarily tell the full story. There is a strong emphasis on the miraculous. Of the various patterns noted, Bentley finds "voluntary association" to be "perhaps the most elusive." He notes, however, a number of incentives involving "political, economic or commercial alliance with well-organized foreigners." When viewing the actual examples of voluntary association, the role of long-distance merchants, often dispersed in trading diasporas across a continent, looms particularly large. Moreover, the local elites, in this way, could establish bonds with more powerful states from which political and military as well as commercial advantages could be gained. Association with a recognized imperial power could also confer domestic political benefits, bolstering otherwise weak regimes.[17]

The pace and depth of conversion must also be taken into consideration. In much of the literature on conversions of Inner Asian peoples, attempts are made, as Devin DeWeese has noted, to "minimize the impact of the 'new' religion or to deny its significance beyond small circles within an Inner Asian state or people."[18] This has certainly been true of some of the scholarship regarding the Khazars. Richard Eaton, in his study of the Islamization of Bengal, provides an important model for the assimilation of a new faith in an agrarian community. His conclusions are equally valid for the pastoral-nomadic peoples. Eaton identified three stages in this process that began in Bengal in the thirteenth century and concluded in the eighteenth century. In the first stage, elements of the new faith were *included* in the already existing belief system. In Bengal this involved the activities of dynamic Ṣûfîs who pioneered the opening of new lands for cultivation and with this the inclusion of Muslim figures in the local pantheon. To proper Muslims this is simply *širk* (polytheism), the gravest sin in Islam. But, in this way, Islamic ideas, however distorted, became familiar and infiltrated the local belief system. In the second stage, Muslim notions, ideas and values came to be identified with elements of the earlier faith as the symbiosis of the no

[16] J. Bentley, *Old World Encounters. Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 8–9.

[17] Bentley, *Old World Encounters*, pp. 9–10.

[18] D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (University Park, Penn., 1994), pp. 301–302.

longer really competing belief systems deepens. Such a situation can last for a long time. Eventually, in the Bengali case, the Mughal government took an active role, alongside entrepreneurial-minded local Muslims, promoting more orthodox versions of Islam. This led to the third stage in which the old religion was *displaced* by a fully Islamic one. Further reform took place, but this was now in an Islamic setting.[19] This pattern of *inclusion*, *identification* and *displacement* can also be observed in the steppe world. Within the Khazar orbit, the initial stages can be seen in the conversion tale of the North Caucasian Huns noted previously. The chopping down of the pagan holy forest by the priests and the conversion of the trees into Christian symbols and a site of Christian worship provides a graphic illustration of what DeWeese terms "assimilative displacement."[20] The burial practices of Islamicizing Volga Bulğaria[21] in the tenth and eleventh centuries still preserved elements of earlier Pre-Islamic custom and belief.[22] Bulğar tomb inscriptions mixed Arabic and Turkic.[23] By the eleventh century, Volga Bulğar scholars were known in the Islamic heartlands.[24] We should bear these models in mind when we examine the course of Khazar Judaization.

Since the closest, contemporary conversion of a Turkic steppe state to a universal, world-religion is that of the Uyğurs, for comparative purposes we might briefly examine this event. In 762, in the Chinese capital, Luoyang, which his forces had "liberated" at the request of the Tang from rebels, Bögü, the Uyğur Qağan, converted to Manichaeanism, having been instructed in that faith by Soġdian Manichaean priests who had

---

[19] R. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204–1760* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 268–303.

[20] Dasxuranc'i/Dowsett, pp. 163–164; De Weese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 292–294.

[21] F.Š. Xuzin, *Volžskaja Bulgarija v domongol'skoe vremja (X-načalo XIII vekov)* (Kazan', 1997), pp. 110–111 suggests that Volga Bulğaria needed a new ideology that corresponded to its now higher level of social and economic development. The Islamization of the Volga Bulğars became the source of a number of conversion tales that are noted by the twelfth century and continued to be reworked into the nineteenth century. See DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 74–78; A.J. Frank, *Islamic Historiography and 'Bulghar' Identity Among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia* (Leiden, 1998).

[22] See E.A. Xalikova, *Musul'manskie nekropoli Volžskoj Bulgarii X-načala XIII v.* (Kazan', 1986), pp. 43 ff.

[23] See T. Tekin, *Volga Bulgar Kitabeleri ve Volga Bulgarcası* (Ankara, 1988); M. Erdal, *Die Sprache der wolgabolgarischen Inschriften* (Turcologica 13, Wiesbaden, 1993).

[24] See G.M. Davletšin, *Volžskaja Bulgarija: duxovnaja kul'tura* (Kazan', 1990); Xužin, *Volžskaja Bulgarija*, pp. 116–119; A. Temir, "Kuzey Türk Edebiyatı" in *Türk Dünyası El-Kitabı* (2nd ed., Ankara, 1992), 3, pp. 705–706.

been residing there. Manichaeanism had been moving along the Silk Route finding devotees among the Soġdians (as had other religions such as Nestorian Christianity) and those peoples with whom they closely interacted, especially the Turkic nomads. Manichaean missionaries at the Uyğur court soon encountered opposition from the Uyğur aristocracy which Bögü for a time overcame. Whether the religion spread much beyond the Uyğur elite is unclear. It did, however, become the state religion,[25] surviving the assassination of Bögü Qağan in a coup led by anti-Manichaean aristocrats in 779.[26] The Soġdian adherents of this faith living among the Uyğurs are noted as *niġošaklar* and *sartlar*. The former term denotes, literally, the "listeners," i.e. the Manichaean rank and file. *Sart*, a term ultimately of Sanskrit origin (*sârtha* "caravan"), meant "merchant" and subsequently in Turkic came to denote the urban (usually Iranian) populace as a whole, with some pejorative connotations.[27] Religion and commerce were often inseparable along the Silk Route.[28]

The Uyğur conversion was known to the medieval Muslim geographers and historians[29] and an-Nadîm portrays them as ready to retaliate against the whole of the Muslim community in their lands, should any of their coreligionists be harmed in the Islamic lands.[30] Clearly, a closer identification with the new faith was taking place.

Much later, in the Mongol-era, Juvainî gives us an important if somewhat garbled account of the conversion itself with Buddhism (much more widespread among the Uyğurs in his day) substituted for Manichaeansim. The account is filled with shamanic references to tree cults,

---

[25] S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaenism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China. A Historical Survey* (Manchester, 1985), pp. 189–194; H.-J. Klimkeit, *Gnosis and the Silk Road. Gnostic Texts from Central Asia* (San Francisco, 1993), pp. 364–368.

[26] See C. Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire According to the T'ang Dynastic Histories* (Canberra, 1972), pp. 88–89, 152–153. Bögü had adopted the title *zahag-i mani* "emanation of Mani," changing, thereby, the ideological underpinnings of his rule.

[27] See also W. Bang, A. von Gabain, "Türkische Turfan Texte, II, Manichaica" *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosoph.—historische Klass, Berlin, 1929), pp. 412, 414, line 16; Clauson, *ED*, p. 846; E. De la Vaissière, *Histoire des marchands sogdiens* 2nd ed. (Paris, 2004), p. 73.

[28] See Liu, Xinru, *Silk and Religion. An Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People A.D. 600–1200* (Oxford-Delhi, 1996).

[29] See V.F. Minorsky, "Tamîm ibn Baḥr's Journey to the Uyghurs" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 12 (1948), pp. 279/283; al-Masʿûdî, *Murûj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 155, and al-Bîrûnî, *Aṯâr al-Baqiyya ʿan al-Qurûn al-Ḫâliyya*, ed. E. Sachau (Leipzig, 1923), p. 204.

[30] an-Nadîm, ed. Flügel, I, p. 337; al-Nadîm/ Dodge, II, pp. 801–802.

holy mountains, the miraculous birth of rulers and dreams that precede the conversion and concludes with a religious debate, all familiar elements in Turkic conversion narratives and found in the Khazar accounts as well.[31]

Why did the Uyğurs convert to this much-persecuted faith? As in other instances, it may have been a very public way of proclaiming their ideological independence from China and to sharpen distinctions with their rivals, the Qarluqs and Qırğız, among whom Nestorian Christianity had made some headway.[32]

The Uyğur conversion to Manichaeanism did not leave a legacy. Manichaeanism faded during the post-imperial diaspora, while Buddhism became dominant, alongside smaller Nestorian Christian communities, both eventually supplanted by Islam (except for a small Buddhist community).[33] A distant observer, the Zoroastrian *Dênkart* (last redaction in the tenth century) provides a curious footnote to this. Surveying the impact of non-Zoroastrian faiths, it remarks that "thus it is clear that the false doctrine of Yišô in Rome (Hrôm) and that of Môšê among the Khazars and that of Mânî in Turkistan took away their might and the valor that they once possessed and made them feeble and decadent among their rivals . . ."[34]

With this as background we may now ask what do we know of the indigenous belief system or systems that were present among the Khazars?[35] What were they converting from? According to Ibn Rusta, aside

---

[31] ʿAlâ ad-Dîn Aṭâ Malik Juvainî, *Taʾrîḫ-i Jahân-Gušâ*, ed. M. Qazwînî (Leiden-London, 1912, 1916, 1937), I, pp. 40–45, E.J. Boyle (trans.), *The History of the World-Conqueror* (Cambridge, Mass, 1958), I, pp. 55–60. See the excellent discussion in DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 282–286, 511–514. Bögü (Turkic "wise") is here called Buqu Khân. After being visited by a tutulary spirit who takes him off to a holy mountain (Aq Tağ) and other shamanic types of initiation, he gains victories. He then has a dream of a holy stone, a dream shared by his vizier. This prompted a campaign that resulted in conquests and the founding of the city of Balasağun/Quz Balıq. The Uyğurs were still shamanists, having experts in the "science of magic" whom they call *qam* (the Turkic term for "shaman"). Buqu then convened a religious debate between the *qam*s and the *toyin*s (Turk. "Buddhist monk" < Chin. *daoren* [*tao-jên*], see Clauson, *ED*, pp. 569, 625)) from China (Ḫitâi). The Buddhist monks won the debate and the Uyğurs were converted to that faith.

[32] Khazanov, "The Spread of World Religions" in Gervers, Schlepp (eds.), *Nomadic Diplomacy*, pp. 19–21.

[33] Lieu, *Manichaeism*, pp. 199–201; E. Pinks, *Die Uiguren von Kan-chou in der frühen Sung-zeit (960–1028)* (Asiatische Forschungen, 24, Wiesbaden, 1968), pp. 108, 113–116.

[34] M. Molé, *La légende de Zoroastre selon textes pehlevis* (Paris, 1967), pp. 236–7.

[35] R.A.E. Mason, "The Religious Beliefs of the Khazars" *The Ukrainian Quarterly*, LX/4 (1995), pp. 383–415, attempts to assemble much of the data on Khazar religious

from the Judaized ruling stratum, the "rest of the Khazars profess a religion similar to that of the Turks."[36] Gardîzî, who drew on the same sources, compares the Khazar native religion to that of the Oğuz Turks.[37]

It is quite likely that Khazar native religion was much like that of the North Caucasian Huns and other Turkic peoples. We have already mentioned the tree cult and how it was transformed by the Christian missionaries to their own purposes. Mention is also made of a god called *K'uar*[38] (not otherwise attested as the name of a deity). Those persons or objects struck by "flashes of thundering fiery lightning and ethereal fire" are considered sacrifices to him.[39] The principle god is *T'angri Xan*, the familiar supreme celestial god *Tengri* of the Inner Asian peoples.[40] To this fearsome "gigantic savage monster," according to Bishop Israyêl, they sacrificed horses. They also made offerings to fire, water, the moon, to "all creatures considered in their eyes to be in some way remarkable" and to "certain gods of the road."[41] This is probably a reference to the Old Türk *yol tengri*,[42] probably a god of fortune. The North Caucasian Huns also beat drums and whistled over corpses, cut themselves as part of their mourning ritual, engaged in naked sword fights at the graves, wrestled and raced their horses this way and that as some were occupied with "weeping and wailing and others in games of diabolical fury."[43] Israyêl also mentions the "royal graves of the thunder" (*čop'ayk'*) and "the tall idols and the *čop'ayk'* with the filthy skins of the altars."[44] The

practices, drawing heavily, as one must, on analogies with the Türks and North Caucasian Huns. This useful study, however, omits a discussion of *qut* and its significance for Khazar sacral kingship.

[36] Ibn Rusta, *Kitâb al-A'lâq an-Nafîsa*, ed. M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1892), p. 139. Ad-Dimašqî, *Kitâb Nuḫbat ad-Dahr fî 'Ajâ'ib al-Barr wa'l-Baḥr*, ed. M.A.F. Mehren (St. Petersburg, 1866), p. 263, says that they "knew not religion (*milla*), like the Turks."

[37] Gardîzî, *Ta'riḫ-i Gardîzî*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabîbî (Tehran, 1363/1984), p. 580.

[38] If not a corruption of Iranian *Xwâr* "sun," this may be from Turkic **köğer* < *kök* "sky" + *er* "man," see Golden, *Khazar Studies*, I, p. 259.

[39] Dasxuranc'i/Dowsett, p. 156. On the thunder and lightning cult among the pagan Uyğurs, see the report in the *Wei-shu*, N. Ja. Bičurin, *Sobranie svedenij o narodax obytavšix v Srednej Azii v drevnie vremena* (1851, reprint: Moskva-Leningrad, 1950), I, pp. 215–216; P.W. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, III, *Die Religionen der Hirtenvölker*, Bd. IX (Freiburg, 1949), pp. 42–43; see also Roux, *La religion*, pp. 121–122.

[40] U. Harva, *Die Religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker* (Folklore Fellows Communications, LII, No. 125, Helsinki, 1938), pp. 140 ff.; A. İnan, *Tarihte ve Bugün Şamanizm* (Ankara, 1954), pp. 26–29; Roux, *La religion*, pp. 110–121, 122–124.

[41] Dasxuranc'i/Dowsett, p. 156.

[42] Noted in the *Irq Bitig*, see T. Tekin, *Irk Bitig. The Book of Omens* (Turcologica, 18, Wiesbaden, 1993), pp. 8 (#2), 20 (#48).

[43] Dasxuranc'i/Dowsett, p. 156.

[44] Dasxuranc'i/Dowsett, pp. 165–166.

term is still found in the North Caucasus today. In Osetin, *coppay* and in Čerkes *čoppa* denote a "ritual dance and singing performed around a person who has been struck by lightning, the refrain repeated during this ritual . . ."[45] In Qaračay-Balqar, it is the name of a fertility deity of thunder and lightning, second only to *Teyri* (= *Tengri*) "to whom a kid was sacrificed." Prayers to *Čoppa* were accompanied by ritual dancing.[46] There are depictions, in aristocratic grave complexes in Khazaria, of scenes of ritual combat, dancing of naked warriors armed with spears and wearing masks. There is also evidence of the worship of oak trees to which animal sacrifies (wild boars) were brought and of totemism.[47]

Of Khazar native religious practices we have few direct notices. Funerary practices, as evidenced by the sites investigated in Khazaria by Russian and Soviet archaelogists, indicate a belief in another world that was much like the one they had left. Warriors were buried with their horses, weapons and food, items they would need in their journey to the next world. Sometimes, in the graves of well to do there were human sacrifices of young women and children (probably slaves or servitors). The skeletons were often wholly or partially destroyed to render the deceased harmless and perhaps to cleanse him or free him from worldly concerns. These and other pagan spiritual concepts were widespread throughout Khazaria, regardless of location or the ethnic affiliations of the deceased.[48]

The Khazar Hebrew conversion accounts mention that the Khazar ruler Bulan drove out the "magicians" (*qosmîm*) and idolators."[49] Presumably, this is a reference to Khazar *qam*s (shamans). The sun amulets worn by the North Caucasian Huns, perhaps a part of the Tengri cult, are found all over Khazar territory.[50] In the *Vita Constantini*, the famous "apostle to the Slavs," the Khazar ruler who summoned him to participate in a religious debate at the Khazar court says "from the first (*ispr'va*) we know of one God who is above all and to Him we bow towards the

[45] V.I. Abaev, *Istoriko-étimologičeskij slovar' osetinskogo jazyka* (Moskva, 1958), I, p. 314.

[46] M.Č. Džurtabaev, *Drevnie verovanija Balkarcev i Karčaevcev* (Naľčik, 1991), pp. 126–128; M.D. Kareketov, *Iz tradicionnoj obrjadovo-kul'tovoj žizni Karačaevcev* (Moskva, 1995) which has a detailed analysis of this cult.

[47] S.A. Pletnëva, *Očerki xazarskoj arxeologii* (Moskva-Ierusalim, 1999), pp. 213–214.

[48] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, pp. 207–210.

[49] P.K. Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932), Hebrew text, p. 21/Russ. trans. p. 75.

[50] Magomedov, *Obrazovanie*, p. 155.

east and observe some of our shameful (*stoud'ny*) customs."[51] At a dinner with the Qağan, the latter raised his goblet saying "we drink in the name of the One God who created every living thing (*tvar'*)."[52] These are probably references to the Tengri cult.

There is clear evidence of a cult of ancestor worship and human sacrifice connected with it. The death of a Khazar *tudun*, in 710–711, occasioned the killing of the Byzantine official who was with him together with three hundred soldiers as part of the funeral observances.[53] Ibn Faḍlân tells us that after constructing over a river a multi-room mausoleum, termed "Paradise," for the deceased Qağan, they decapitated those who built it.[54]

Al-Iṣṭaḫrî notes the reverence with which the Khazar royal grave was approached. Anyone riding towards the tomb had to dismount, prostrate himself before the tomb and then continue on foot until he was at a suitable distance from the holy site.[55] The Qağan, of course, given his possession of *qut* (the heavenly mandate/good fortune to rule)[56] was accorded extraordinary respect. Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, and others, remark on his sacral character. He rarely appeared in public. When the *Beg*/*Išad*[57]/*Yilig* (the deputy ruler who ran the actual affairs of state) approached him, he

---

[51] T. Lehr-Spławiński, *Żywoty Konstantyna i Metodego (Obszerne)* (Poznań, 1959), pp. 26–27.

[52] Lehr- Spławiński, *Żywoty Konstantyna i Metodego*, pp. 34–35.

[53] Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883, reprint: Hildesheim, 1963), I, pp. 378–379. Theophanes remarks that this was done εἵς δοχήν (lit. "for the entertainment") of the Tudun. This is hardly correct. Dieter Ludwig, noting the other ms. readings (δογήν, δογήν, δουγήν) correctly connects this term with the Old Turkic **ḏoğ* > *yoğ* "funeral feast," see Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft*, I, pp. 356–357; Clauson, *ED*, p. 895.

[54] Ibn Faḍlân/Togan, Arabic, p. 44/Germ. trans. pp. 99–100. After the death of the Qağan, "they build a great hall (*dâr kabîra*) for him with twenty rooms (*bait*) and they dig a grave in each room for him. They crush stones until they become like kohl and it is spread about and lime (*nûra*) is thrown over this. Under the hall is a river. The river is a large one that flows rapidly. They make the river flow over the grave and say (this is done) so that no devil (*šayṭân*), or man, or maggot (*dûd*) or reptiles (*huwâm*) may reach it. When he is buried, they strike the neck of those who buried him so that no one will know where his grave is among those rooms. They call his grave "Paradise." They say he has entered Paradise. They spread across all the rooms silk brocade woven with gold."

[55] Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, *Kitâb Masâlik al-Mamâlik*, ed. M.J. De Goeje (2nd ed., Leiden, 1927), p. 224.

[56] See A. Bombaci, "Qutluγ Bolzun!" *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher*, 36 (1965), pp. 284–291; 38 (1966), pp. 13–43.

[57] The title Išad derives from the Soġd. *Išxâḏ* which in Khazar became **Ihšad* > *Išad*, see P.B. Golden, "Khazarica: Notes on Some Khazar Terms" *Turkic Languges* 9/2 (2005), pp. 212–213.

prostrated himself, "rolling himself in the dust" (*tamarraġa fî at-turâb*) and then waited until he was summoned.[58] Ibn Faḍlân reports that the deputy ruler daily "enters (into the presence of the Great Qağan, humbly (*mutawâḍiʿan*), showing humility (*iḫbât*) and calmness (*sakîna*). He only enters before him barefoot and in his hand is a piece of firewood (*ḥaṭab*). When he greets him, he ignites this piece of firewood between his hands and when it is all burned up, he sits together with the king on his throne, on his right side."[59] The use of purifying fire so that one might be admitted to the royal presence was well-known in the steppe world.[60] These rites must also be considered part of the pre-conversion Khazar religion.

These or similar types of funerary practices involving human sacrifice were widespread in the steppe. Al-Muqaddasî (al-Balḫî)[61] says of the Turks that "among them are those who bury with the deceased their slaves and servants, (leaving them) alive, in the grave mound, until they die."[62] Other examples can be cited for groups ranging from the Scythians, Xiongnu, Hephthalites, Qitans, Qıpčaqs, Mongols, Jurčens and Ottomans.[63] The Khazar grave structure described by Ibn Faḍlân is an example of the *qorığ* "a royal enclosure,"[64] which is clearly linked with

---

[58] Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, ed. De Goeje, p. 224.

[59] Ibn Faḍlân/Togan, Arabic, p. 43/Germ. trans. p. 99.

[60] For example, Zemarchus, the Byzantine envoy to the Türks and his baggage, were subjected to a shamanic, purifying ritual involving fire when he entered the Türk-controlled lands of Soġdia, see *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. trans. R.C. Blockley (Liverpool, 1985), pp. 118/119. The Rus' prince, Mikhail of Černigov, was required to walk between two fires before he was to be brought before the Činggisid Batu. When he refused to bow before idols of Činggis, he was executed, see *Die Mongolengeschichte des Johannes von Piano Carpini*, ed. trans. J. Gießauf (Graz, 1995), Latin text, pp. 89–90/Germ. trans. pp. 135–146; see also M. Dimnik, *Mikhail, Prince of Chernigov and Grand Prince of Kiev 1224–1246* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 130–135 and Roux, *La religion*, pp. 222–224.

[61] I. Ju. Kračkovskij, *Arabskaja geografičeskaja literatura* in his *Izbrannye Sočinenija* (Moskva-Leningrad, 1955–1960), IV, p. 195 identifies the author of this work with Muṭahhar b. Ṭâhir al-Muqaddasî.

[62] Al-Balḫî, *Kitâb al-Bad waʾt-Taʾrîḫ*, ed. Ch. Huart (Paris, 1899–1916), IV, p. 22.

[63] E. Tryjarski, *Zwyczaje pogrzebowe ludów tureckich na tle ich wierzeń* (Warszawa, 1991), pp. 205–208; De Weese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 263–267; S. Vryonis, "Evidence of Human Sacrifice Among the Early Ottomans," *Journal of Asian History*, 5/2 (1971), pp. 140–146; Golden, "Religion Among the Qıpčaqs" *CAJ*, 42/2 (1998), pp. 194–195. According to Marco Polo, some 20,000 people were slaughtered with the burial of Möngke (d. 1259), see Marco Polo, *The Description of the World*, ed. trans. A.C. Moule, P. Pelliot (London, 1938), I, pp. 167–168.

[64] Clauson, *ED*, p. 652 *qorığ* "an enclosure, enclosed area, particularly one enclosed by a ruler." In Qarkhanid Turkic it denoted "the private property of chiefs etc., any enclosed space is called *qorığ*." In the Činggisid era Qıpčaq, *qoruğ* or *qoru* could mean both "royal estate" and "private property."

Old Türk burial customs.[65] Archaeologists have found many ashpits in maritime Daghestan, an early area of Khazar habitation. These are connected with sun or fire cults that may have been part of Khazar worship. In addition, there are finds of the teeth of boars, dogs and wolves, some of them perforated, in both Daghestan and Saltovo-Majackaja culture areas, that, very likely, had some cultic functions or were used as amulets.[66]

Monotheistic world religions were already penetrating Khazaria, in particular Christianity.[67] Archaeologists have unearthed evidence of a sizable number of Christian churches in maritime Daghestan, a region of Khazar influence. In particular, this was the work of Armenian/Albanian missionaries operating out of Č'or (Darband/Bâb al-Abwâb or a locale near it)[68] long active in missionary efforts among a variety of "Hunnic" peoples. There is also evidence of Georgian Christian missionary activity elsewhere in the region.[69] In this connection we may note the Georgian Life of St. Abo (< Arab. Ḥabîb) who was martyred in 786. An Arab Muslim who had taken service with the Georgian Prince Nerses, he fled with his master to the Khazars, ca. 779–780. The latter are described as "wild men, fearsome of face, savage in character, drinkers of blood, without religion except that they recognize a god the creator."

---

[65] See discussion in DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 181–183, 188. Connected with these customs, perhaps, is the strange account in aṭ-Ṭabarî, according to which in the aftermath of the Arab defeat suffered at the hands of the Khazars at Balanjar in 32/652, the body of the slain commander of the Arab forces from Bâb al-Abwâb/Darband, ʿAbd ar-Raḥmân b. Rabîʿa, was placed in a basket (*safaṭ*) and they "ask for water by means of it and ask for victory by it up to today." Zaxoder saw in this a possible reflection of the rain-cult and rain-stone that was so well-known among the Turkic peoples, see aṭ-Ṭabarî, *Taʾrîḫ aṭ-Ṭabarî*, ed. M. Ibrâhîm (Cairo, 1967–1969), IV, pp. 304–305; B.N. Zaxoder, *Kaspijskij svod svedenij o Vostočnoj Evrope* (Mosvka, 1962, 1967), I, pp. 148–149. On the rain cult and rain stone, see İnan, *Şamanizm*, pp. 160–165; Roux, *La religion*, pp. 95–98.

[66] Magomedov, *Obrazovanie*, pp. 155–158.

[67] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, p. 214, suggests that "the intellectual elite of Khazar society" was already moving to "the adoption of world religions." The evidence for Zoroastrianism is very thin, see Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft*, p. 318 and D.M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, 1954), p. 189.

[68] Also Č'oław / Čoray/ Ṣûl/Τζούρ, Dasxuranc'i/Dowsett, pp. 5n.3; J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig, 1903, reprint: Hildesheim, 1961), pp. 444, 489.

[69] Magomedov, *Obrazovanie*, pp. 5, 158, 164–171. See also discussion in Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft*, pp. 318–318. Remains of two churches have been found in the necropolis of the Verxnečirjurtovskoe gorodišče. Large numbers of Christian artifacts and cultic objects are also present.

In other words, the Khazars, at this time, were still largely followers of the Tengri cult. Here, Abo, converted to Christianity.[70]

According to al-Muqaddasî, writing in the late tenth century, the bulk of the inhabitants of Samandar, one of the early Khazar centers in the North Caucasus, were Christians.[71] Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, however, mentions that there are Muslims and mosques in Samandar, but notes that "their king is a Jew" and a relative of the Khazar ruler. Ibn Ḥawqal (who took much of his information from al-Iṣṭaḫrî or their common source) says that "the Muslims and people of various other faiths and pagans (*Ṭabaqât ahl al-milal wa'l-waṯaniyûn*) inhabited this country and adds that there are mosques, churches and synagogues in Samandar.[72]

The Crimea, a region in which there was often an uneasy Byzantine-Khazar condominium, was another source of ongoing Christian influences emanating from the Crimean Goths and the Black Sea Christian communities.[73] When the Khazars extended their influence over Ap'xazet'i/Abxazia-Western Georgia (whose ruler ca. 780, Leon, was the grandson of the Khazar Qağan and who had asserted his independence of Constantinople with Khazar aid), an anti-Khazar revolt broke out (780s, perhaps 790s) in Gothia. Although there is no direct evidence to tie Byzantium to it, it is indicative of the friction that had developed in this region.[74] These conflicts form part of the background to the Khazar conversion. There is also some evidence for the creation of a larger Church structure in the region in the form of a number of episcopal seats, subject to the metropolitanate of Doros (Gothic Crimea) and covering the lower Volga, North Caucasian and Crimean zones.[75] The

---

[70] The sources of his conversion, apparently, were the "many towns and villages in that northern land which by the grace of the Holy Ghost abide securely in the Christian faith," see D.M. Lang (ed. trans.), *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints* (London, 1956, reprint: Crestwood, NY, 1976), pp. 118–119.

[71] Al-Muqaddasî, *Aḥsan at-Taqâsim fî Maʿrîfat al-Aqâlîm*, ed, M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1877, 2nd ed. 1906), p. 361. On Samandar and the difficulties of its geographical location, see Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft*, I, pp. 246–248.

[72] Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, ed. M.J. De Goeje, pp. 222–223; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitâb Ṣûrat al-Arḍ* (Beirut, 1992), p. 333.

[73] For an overview of Byzantine Christian activities in Khazaria, see F. Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (Praha, 1933, 2nd ed. Hattiesburg, Mississippi, 1969), pp. 157 ff.

[74] *K'art'lis C'xovreba*, ed. S. Qauxč'išvili (T'bilisi, 1955), I, p. 251; see discussion in Golden, *Khazar Studies*, I, p. 66; Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar* (Leningrad, 1962), pp. 252–258.

[75] These included ὁ Χοτζήρων (perhaps "of the Khazars"), ὁ Ἀστὴλ (Atıl), ὁ Χουάλης (the Khwârazmian elements of the Khazar state, cf. Rus' Хвалисы) ὁ Ὀνογούρων

dating of this organizational proposal and its actual impact are uncertain (last quarter of the eighth century?).[76] Clearly, there was a serious effort to strengthen the Christian/Byzantine position in Khazaria at this time. Why? Was this a response to the growing Jewish influence, to the conversion of the Khazar ruler to Judaism noted in al-Masʿûdî or a factor contributing to that conversion?

Equally important as a background factor was the protracted struggle in which the Khazars and Arabs had been engaged for control of the Caucasus.[77] In 737, the Umayyad general (and subsequently last Umayyad Caliph) Marwân broke through into the Khazar core lands on the Volga, captured the Qağan and forced him to convert to Islam. According Ibn Aʿṯam al-Kûfî, "and with him many people of his house became Muslims and people of his country."[78]

There is very little evidence to indicate that the Qağan remained a Muslim. The quick retreat of the Arab armies and the growing disorder in the Umayyad Caliphate, which was toppled in 750, left little political pressure to remain Muslim. There is one notice, however, which may indicate that Islam had continued among some elements of the Khazar ruling clan. Al-Iṣṭaḫrî (writing in the middle of the tenth century, although much of his data is drawn from earlier sources) reports that the Qağanal office was barred to a very able member of the royal clan (who sold fish in the market) because he was a Muslim, "for they only

(the Onoğurs), ὁ Ῥετὶγ, ὁ Οὖννων (the North Caucasian Huns?), ὁ Ταμάταρχα (Rusʾ Тмутороканьь); for the list see G.I. Konidares, "Αἱ Μητροπόλεις καὶ Ἀρχιεπισκοπαὶ τοῦ οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαχείου καὶ ἥ τάξις αὐτῶν" *Texte und Forschungen zur byzantinsich-neugriechischen Philologie*, 13 (1934), p. 100; see also J. Moravcsik, "Byzantinische Mission im Kreise der Türkvölker an der Nordkküste des Schwarzen Meeres" in J.M. Hussey et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 21–24; Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft*, p. 322.

[76] It is preserved in a fourteenth century Greek manuscript. Obolensky would place it earlier, between 733–746, see Artamonov, *Ist. Xazar*, pp. 258–261; D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500–1453* (London, 1971), pp. 174–175. J. (Gy.) Moravcsik, "Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars in the Period of Their Migration" *The American Slavic and East European Review*, 5 (1946), pp. 40–41; Dvornik, *Les légendes*, p. 164.

[77] On the Arabo-Khazar war, see the excellent treatment in Dunlop, *History*, pp. 41–87.

[78] Ibn Aʿṯam al-Kûfî, *Al-Futûḥ* (Beirut, 1412/1992), III, pp. 252–255. A briefer account of these events is given by al-Balâḏurî according to whom the "chief of al-Khazar" (*ʿaẓîm al-Ḫazar*) terrified by Marwân's might, quickly accepted Islam when Marwân offered him the choice of conversion or war, see al-Balâḏurî, *Futûḥ al-Buldân*, ed. M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1895), p. 208 or the later edition by R.M. Raḍwân (Cairo, 1959), pp. 209–210.

summon to the Qağanate one who professes Judaism."[79] The story, if true, would indicate that some members of the Qağanal house had either retained their allegiance to Islam or had been subsequently converted. In any event, there were still Muslims within the ruling clan. It is hard to imagine, however, given the high positions held by Muslims in Khazar society and government, that this young man was reduced to fish-mongering because of his religion.

According to Ibn Faḍlân the legal affairs of the Muslims who reside in or come to Khazaria for trade are handled by a Muslim slave (*ġulâm*) of the Khazar king who is called *Ḫz* (cf. Khwârazmian χž "pleasant"?)[80] "and no one else hears their cases or passes judgments among them."[81] Al-Masʿûdî, in the 940's, reports that the *wazîr* of the Khazar king was a Muslim named Aḥmad b. Kûya and notes that Muslims "are predominant (*ġâlib*) in" the capital Atıl/Itil, "because they constitute the army of the king. They are called in this town *Ursiyya*."[82] This standing army of the king, perhaps the royal comitatus, al-Masʿûdî is only talking of the troops within the capital, was staffed by an immigrant community of Muslims from the Khwârazm region who had left their homeland, "after the appearance of Islam," and had taken service with the king of the Khazars. Aḥmad b. Kûya was from this community.[83] When the king warred on Infidels, he was accompanied by 7000 of them. They stood aside, however, in wars with Muslims.[84] We can see that non-Judaic religious allegiance did not preclude access to the highest levels of power.

---

[79] Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, ed. De Goeje, p. 224. See Dunlop, *History*, pp. 97–98 for a slightly different translation.

[80] W.B. Henning, *A Fragment of a Khwarezmian Dictionary*, ed. D.N. MacKenzie (London, 1971), p. 49.

[81] Ibn Faḍlân/Togan, Arabic, p. 45/Germ. trans. 102.

[82] That is *Ors/Urus*, this is an old Iranian name going back to the *Auruša* "white," cf. the Ἀορσοι (Aorsoi), cf. Osetic *Ors/Urs*, see J. Harmatta, *Studies in the History and Language of the Sarmatians* (Szeged, 1970), p. 85; P.B. Golden, "Cumanica III: Urusoba" in D. Sinor (ed.), *Aspects of Altaic Civilization III. Proceedings of the Thirtieth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference*, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, June 19–15, 1987, Bloomington, 1990), pp. 33–46.

[83] Omeljan Pritsak has suggested that Aḥmad b. Kûya was of a family/clan of hereditary wazîrs in Khazaria and that the family name, *Kûya* (< *kaoya* of old Iranian origin from the sacral Iranian ruling dynasty of the *Kaway*) lies at the root of the toponym Kiev, see N. Golb, O. Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century* (Ithaca, 1982), pp. 53–54. For a critique of that view, see P.P. Toločko, "K voprosu o xazaro-iudejskom proisxoždenii Kieva" *Xazarskij al'manax* 2 (Kiev-Khar'kov-Moskva, 2004), pp. 99–108

[84] Al-Masʿûdî, Murûj, ed. Pellat, I, p. 213.

With these remarks we have come to the question of the conversion itself. What do we know of the circumstances of the conversion, its setting and dating? The historicity of the conversion narratives has been explored by Dunlop, Pritsak and others.[85] Pritsak has termed them "epic narratives" and there are certainly elements that fit within the general mold of Turkic conversion tales. The dating remains problematic. It is, perhaps, most useful to examine our sources chronologically or according to the era from which our source has drawn its information.

As has long been noticed, none of the contemporary sources emanating from their immediate neighbors make direct mention of the Khazar conversion. The earliest source is the passage in Christian of Stavelot's (also known as Druthmar of Aquitaine) commentary on Matthew (*Expositio in Matthaeum Evangelistam*) the extant manuscripts of which date to the tenth century.[86] The sources for the notice are dated to sometime after the death of Charlemagne and before the conversion of the Balkan Bulğar ruler Boris to Christianity in 864—although a recent study suggests that it might have stemmed from South Italian or Roman sources of the 860's or 870's. The text says "We are not aware of any nation under the sky that would not have Christians among them. For even in Gog and Magog, the Hunnic people who call themselves Gazari, those whom Alexander confined, there was a tribe more brave than the others. This tribe had already been circumcised, and they profess all dogmata of Judaism (*omnem Judaismum observat*). However, the Bulgars, who are also from those seven tribes, are now becoming baptized."[87]

The *Gazari* are, presumably, the Khazars although this term or the "*Kozary*" of the perhaps nearly contemporary *Vita Constantini* (Constantine/Cyril was in the Khazar state ca. 861) could have reflected any of a number of peoples within Khazaria.[88] The *Vita Constantini* (written

[85] Dunlop, *History*, chaps. v–vi; Pritsak, "The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, II (1978), pp. 261–281.

[86] L.S. Chekin, "Christian of Stavelot and the Conversion of Gog and Magog. A Study of the Ninth-Century References to Judaism Among the Khazars" *Russia Mediaevalis*, IX/1 (1997), p. 15.

[87] See text Christian Druthmar, "Expositio in Matthaeum Evangelistam," *Patrologiae cursus completus*, series latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1864), t. 106, c. 1456 and the lengthy analysis of the text by Chekin, "Christian of Stavelot" *Russia Mediaevalis*, IX/1 (1997), pp. 13–34, Latin text, and Eng. trans. pp. 17–18.

[88] Chekin, "Christian of Stavelot" *Russia Mediaevalis*, IX/1 (1997), pp. 29–30; Pritsak, "Conversion: *HUS*, II, (1978), p. 271.

perhaps in the early 880s, if not immediately after Constantine's death in 869)[89] tells of a religious debate held at the court of the Khazar ruler. According to this account the debate took place because "the Jews are counseling us (*ustjat ny*) to accept their faith and usages (*detel'*) and the Saracens, on the other hand, offering peace and many gifts, are pulling us to their faith." Hence, the appeal to the Byzantine emperor, "because of our old friendship and love," to send "a learned man" to present the Christian position and "should he defeat the Jews and Saracens we will adopt your faith."[90] From this it would appear that the question of Khazar religious orientation, at the highest levels, was still undecided ca. 861, although local partisans of Judaism clearly held high, influential positions at the court and were shaping the policy debate within the government. In other words, Judaism was by this time a powerful presence within the Khazar state. Constantine's mission was fundamentally political in nature and could not have been otherwise. Political issues were, in any event, inevitably and inextricably intertwined with proselytizing efforts.[91] Success would have altered the Judaizing course of the Khazar government and brought the Khazar Empire fully into the "Byzantine Commonwealth." Although it did not succeed on the religious plane, Constantine, according to the *Vita*, was able to bring home some Byzantine prisoners who had been in Khazar captivity and firm up the Khazaro-Byzantine *entente*.[92] The *Vita* indicates more than hints that not all had been well in Khazar-Byzantine relations. More importantly, the

---

[89] The earliest mss. however stem from the fifteenth century, see Lehr-Spławiński, *Żywoty Konstantyna i Metodego*, pp. xxiii–xxiv; C. Zuckerman, "On the Date of the Khazar King's Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus Oleg and Igor" *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 53 (1995), p. 243. On the numerous problems associated with the *Žitie Konstantina*, see S.B. Bernštejn, *Konstantin-filosof i Mefodij* (Mosvka, 1984), pp. 23 ff.; O. Pritsak, "Turkological Remarks on Constantine's Khazarian Mission in the *Vita Constantini* in E.G. Farrugia et al. (eds.), *Christianity Among the Slavs: The Heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius; Acts of the International Congress Held on the Eleventh Centenary of the Death of St. Methodius, Rome, October 8–11, 1985* (Rome, 1988), p. 298.

[90] For the *Vita Constantini*, see Lehr-Spławiński, *Żywoty Konstantyna i Metodego*, pp. 27 ff.; *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses, Fontes*, eds. F. Grivec, F. Tomšić in *Radovi Staroslavenskog Instituta* (Zagreb), IV (1960), pp. 109 ff.

[91] Dvornik, *Les légendes*, p. 176 writes "Le but de l'ambassade de 860 était donc plutôt politique, contrairement à ce qu'en dit la Vie de Constantin." See also Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, pp. 176–177.

[92] Indeed, the Qağan wrote to the Emperor that "we are all confederates and friends (*druzi i prijateli*) of your empire and are ready to serve you wherever you may request," Lehr-Spławiński, Żywoty *Konstantyna i Metodego*, pp. 58–59.

Vita appears to have distorted the actual situation at the Khazar court. The Khazar elite had already converted to Judaism (see below).

Somewhat more problematic is the account of Eldad ha-Dani, a mysterious Jewish traveler and tale-teller, who is said to have visited Spain ca. 880 and wrote of the presence of the tribe of Simeon and the half-tribe of Manasseh in the land of the Khazars. The authenticity of the texts has been called into question.[93] He is, perhaps, the figure claiming Danite descent who visited Spain "in the days of our fathers" mentioned in the letter of Ḥasdai ben Šaprûṭ, the Jewish courtier of the Spanish Umayyads who initiated the Khazar correspondence.[94]

Ibn Ḫurdâḏbih (d. ca. 912) was the master of the post in al-Jibâl (Media) and a man who was well informed about the lands of the ʿAbbâsid Caliphate and its neighbors. His *Kitâb al-Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik*, which underwent two redactions (846–7 and 885–6, not all of which survives), has a very valuable notice on the Jewish merchants, the Râḏânivya, who came to the Khazar cities as part of their trans-Eurasian itinerary and appear to have been supplanted by the Rus' by the time of the second redaction.[95] The surviving text says nothing about Khazar Judaism. Ibn al-Faqîh, however, who drew liberally on Ibn Ḫurdâḏbih has more information on this, as we shall see. Pritsak has suggested that the thirteenth-century compiler, Yâqût, in his *Muʿjam al-Buldân*, who remarks that "their (the Khazar) king" (*malikuhum*) is a Jew,[96] took this part of his text from Ibn Ḫurdâḏbih. This would be the earliest Muslim reference to Khazar Judaism.[97] But, Yâqût himself says that he took his information from Ibn Faḍlân and it is more widely accepted that the former and al-Iṣṭaḫrî are the primary sources for the *Muʿjam*'s notices on the Khazars.[98]

---

[93] See discussion in Dunlop, *History*, pp. 140–141, 168; Marquart, *Streifzüge*, pp. 197–198 and n. 3. On Eldad, see S.W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, III (New York, 1952–1983), III pp. 116–117, 208, VI, pp. 220–221.

[94] Kokovcov, *Perepiska*, Heb. text, p. 18/Russ. trans.pp. 69–70.

[95] Ibn Ḫurdâḏbih, *Kitâb al-Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik*, ed. M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1889), pp. 153–155. On Ibn Ḫurdâḏbih, see the comments in T. Lewicki, *Źródła arabskie do dziejów Slowiańszczyzny* (Wrocław-Kraków, 1956–1988), I, pp. 43–63; A.P. Novoseľcev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo i ego rol' v istorii Vostočnoj Evropy i Kavkaza* (Moskva, 199), p. 10; Mihály Kmoskó, *Mohamedán írók a steppe népeiről. Földrajzi irodalom*, (Budapest, 1997), I/1, pp. 40–42; H. Göckenjan and I. Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte über die Völker Osteuropas und Zentralasiens im Mittelalter. Die Ǧayhânî-Tradition* Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaic, Bd. 54 (Weisbaden, 2001), pp. 29–30.

[96] Yâqût, *Muʿjam al-Buldân* (Beirut, 1957), II, p. 368.

[97] Pritsak, "Conversion" *HUS*, II (1978), p. 279 n. 76.

[98] Dunlop, *History*, pp. 100 ff.

There is a sizable corpus of Muslim historians who take note of the Khazars (given the prolonged warfare between the Arabs and the Khazars they could hardly have failed to do so), but they, too, are silent about Khazar Judaism. They include such important ninth and early tenth century authors as: al-Yaʿqûbî, al-Balâḏurî and aṭ-Ṭabarî. Ibn Aʿṯam al-Kûfî (d.926) noted the conversion of the Qağan to Islam, but has nothing to say regarding other religions in Khazaria.

The situation changes, however, with Ibn al-Faqîh whose *Kitâb al-Buldân* was probably written ca. 902–903 (he died in the 950s)[99] and largely drew on Ibn Ḫurdâḏbih. He reports, however, that "all of the Khazars are Jews. But, they have been Judaized recently."[100] Lewicki was of the opinion that this notice was taken directly from Ibn Ḫurdâḏbih and hence dates to the 840's or 880's.[101] It might also, however, be an updating of the latter's material by Ibn al-Faqîh, reflecting the large-scale Judaization of the Khazars that had occurred by the time of his writing.

The *Kitâb al-Aʿlâq an-Nafîsa* (written ca. 903–912) of Ibn Rusta, only one book of which has survived, dates from about the same time as Ibn al-Faqîh's work. Basically a compiler, like so many of the Islamic geographers, Ibn Rusta drew on a number of sources, both contemporary merchants and travelers and written works from the mid- to late-ninth century.[102] He says of the Khazars that "their supreme chief professes Judaism as does also the *Îšâ[d]* and those of the leaders and great ones who sympathize with his inclinations. The rest of them profess a religion similar to that of the Turks."[103]

Gardîzî whose *Zayn al-Aḫbâr* dates from ca. 1050, drew from many of the same sources used by Ibn Rusta. He reports that the Qağan and *Išâd* are Jews as "are all who are inclined (*meil dârad*) to (these) two from among the generals (*sarhangân*) and great men. The rest of them have a faith (*bar dînî and*) which resembles that of the religion of the Oğuz Turks (*ba-dîn-i turkân-i ġuzz mânad*)."[104]

---

[99] See discussion in Lewicki, *Źródła*, II/1, pp. 9–10.

[100] Ibn al-Faqîh, *Kitâb al-Buldân*, ed. M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1885), p. 298.

[101] Lewicki, *Źródła*, II/1, pp. 40–41 and comments p. 121.

[102] These included Ibn Ḫurdâḏbih, the lost work of al-Jaihânî (d. ca. 892–907?), the famous essayist al-Jaḥîaẓ, Ibn Qutayba, Hârûn ibn Yaḥyâ (who as a prisoner spent time in Byzantium and later in the Balkans, Venice and Rome) and other sources. On the complexities and dating problems of Ibn Rusta and his sources, see Lewicki, *Źródła*, II/2, pp. 7–17; Göckenjan and Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, pp. 33–35.

[103] Ibn Rusta, *Kitâb al-Aʿlâq an-Nafîsa*, ed. De Goeje, p. 139.

[104] Gardîzî, *Taʾrîḫ*, ed. Ḥabîbî, p. 580. On his sources, some of which, with regard to

Ibn Faḍlân, one of our few sources who actually set foot in the region (in 921–922), in his capacity as secretary to the Caliphal mission to Volga Bulğaria, reports that "the Khazars and their king are all Jews" (*wa al-ḫazar wa malikuhum kulluhum yahûd*). This section, however, is not found in the Mašhad manuscript, but preserved in Yâqût's occasionally jumbled compilation.[105] It is clear, nonetheless, that by his time the core element of the state, the Khazars, were Judaized.

Roughly contemporary to Ibn Faḍlân was Saʿadiah Gaon (892–942) who makes several references to the Khazars and Khazaria, but says nothing explicitly about their Judaism. The latter might be implied from his mention of a certain Isaac Bar Abraham of Iraq who went to Khazaria and settled there.[106] But, it could be argued that the Khazar economy attracted men of a variety of religions and Saʿadiah's comment might only indicate that there was a Jewish community there. Saʿadiah's lack of explanation about Khazar Judaism might also indicate that it was so well-known to his audience that there was no need to belabor the obvious.

The Qaraite scholar, al-Qirqisânî, writing ca. 937, in his comments on Genesis 9:27, mentions that "some other commentators are of the opinion that this verse alludes to the Khazars who accepted Judaism."[107] Again, there is no explanation, but rather the sense that the audience knew well what the reference was. Certainly, by this time, the association of Khazaria and Judaism in the Jewish world was an established fact, not requiring further commentary. Zvi Ankori who examined these and other statements emanating from the Qaraite communities, concluded that the general tenor of al-Qirqisânî's remarks displayed a certain lack

---

the Turkic world, date to the latter part of the eighth century, see K. Czeglédy, "Gardîzî on the History of Central Asia (746–780 A.D.)" *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 27 (1973), pp. 257–267 and Göckenjan and Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, pp. 36–42. The anonymous *Ḥudûd al-ʿÂlam*, trans. V. Minorsky (London, 1937, 2nd ed., 1970), pp. 161–162, in its truncated and somewhat garbled version of this tradition makes no mention of Khazar Judaism.

[105] Yâqût, *Muʿjam al-Buldân* (Beirut ed.), II, p. 369. Earlier, II, p. 368, he had only noted "their king is a Jew" (*wa malikuhum yahûdî*); Ibn Faḍlân/Togan, Arabic text, p. 45/ Germ. trans. p104. The edition by Sâmî ad-Dahân, *Risâla Ibn Faḍlân* (Damascus, 1379/ 1959) omits this part.

[106] See citations in Dunlop, *History*, pp. 220–221.

[107] Text and translation cited in Z. Ankori, *The Karaites in Byzantium* (Jerusalem-New York, 1959), pp. 67–68; see also Dunlop, *History*, p. 132n.44. Genisis: 27 reads: "God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

of enthusiasm for these converts. Other Qaraite commentators, such as Yafet b. ʿAlî of Baṣra (fl. 950–980), maligned them with the charge of bastardy. Ankori, on the basis of Qaraite hostility towards the Khazars, considers it quite unlikely that the Khazars would have been converts to Qaraism.[108] This appears to find further confirmation in the genuine Khazar documents. In particular, the letter which is believed to have stemmed from the Khazar community in tenth century Kiev, shows no traces of non-Rabbinical Judaism.[109]

Al-Masʿûdî, in his description of the Khazar capital, Atıl/Itil, writes: "In this city there are Muslims, Christians, Jews and pagans. As concerns the Jews, they are the king (*malik*, by which he later notes he means the Qağan), his entourage and the Khazars of his tribe (*min jinsihi*). The king of the Khazars converted to Judaism during the caliphate of (Hârûn) ar-Rašîd (reg. 786–809, pbg). Some Jews joined him, arriving there from various Islamic urban centers and from Byzantium (Rûm). This was because the king of Rûm, in our time i.e in 332/943 it is Armanûs (Romanos Lekapenos, reg. 920–944), converted those Jews who were in his kingdom to the Christian religion, using coercion on them . . ." He goes on to note that many Jews fled from Byzantium to Khazaria as a consequence of this. He also writes that he has discussed the conversion of the Khazar ruler in another work.[110] Unfortunately, this work has not come down to us. This is, however, the clearest statement we have for the conversion to Judaism at the highest levels in Khazar society and for an influx of Jews from abroad.

It is quite likely that we have an abridged version of the conversion account in ad-Dimašqî, writing ca. 727/1327, who attributes the notice to Ibn al-Aṯîr and has clearly jumbled, other, imperfectly understood, sections from Ibn al-Miskawaih. He also places it in the time of Hârûn ar-Rašîd.[111]

---

[108] Although some tenth century Palestinian Qaraite authors show evidence of messianic expectations from Khazaria, see Ankori, *The Karaites*, pp. 64–78.

[109] Golb, Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*, pp. 30–32. The interpretation of the names of the letter's signatories is not without problems, see A.N. Torpusman, "Antroponimiia i etnicheskie kontakty narodov Vostochnoi Evropy v srednie veka" in M. Chlenov (ed.), *Imia—étnos—istoriia* (Moskva, 1989), pp. 48–53. See some of the questions raised regarding the place of composition of this letter in Erdal's contribution to this volume.

[110] Al-Masʿûdî, *Murûj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 212. On the persecution of Byzantine Jews by Romanos, see A. Scharf, *Byzantine Jewry. From Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (London, 1071), pp. 97–99.

[111] Ad-Dimašqî, *Nuẖbat ad-Dahr*, ed. F. Mehren, p. 263; Ibn Miskawaih, *Tajârub*

Of the other surviving works attributed (albeit with some considerable uncertainty) to al-Masʿûdî, the *ʾAjâʾib ad-Dunyâ* and the *Aḫbâr az-Zamân* we find the brief notice that "as concerns the Turks . . ., they possess no religion. Some of them profess the faith of the Majus and others are Judaized."[112] This tells us little.

Al-Iṣṭaḫrî (ca. 951, but most probably harkening back to an earlier time) reports that "their king is a Jew" and that "the Khazars are Muslims, Christians and Jews and among them are idolaters. The smallest group are the Jews, most of them are Muslims and Christians, except the king and his people of distinction (who) are Jews. The morality of the pagans prevails among them."[113] Ibn Ḥawqal (writing in the 970's) repeats essentially the same notice as does also the thirteenth century compiler, Yâqût (ca. 1229).[114] This theme limiting Judaism to the Khazar ruling elite is also reflected in the mid-eleventh century author, Isḥâq ibn al-Ḥusain and in the anonymous twelfth century *Risâla fî'l-Aqâlîm*.[115]

From about the mid-tenth century also stems the famous Khazar Correspondence between Ḥasdai ibn Šaprûṭ, the Jewish courtier of the Spanish Umayyads and the Khazar king, Joseph. Stemming from this same era is the "Letter of an Unknown Khazar Jew" or Cambridge Document" (previously called the "Schechter Document") found among the treasures of the Cairo Geniza and dated, perhaps, to ca. 949.[116] The issue of the authenticity of the Correspondence has a long and mottled history which need not detain us here. Dunlop and most recently Golb have demonstrated that Ḥasdai's letter, Joseph's response (dating

---

al-Umam, ed. H.F. Amedroz, trans. D.S. Margoliouth (Oxford, 1920–1921), II, p. 209; Ibn al-Aṯîr, *Al-Kâmil fî't-Taʾrîḫ*, ed. C.J. Tornberg (Leiden, 1851–1876, reprint: Beirut, 1965–1966 with differing pagination), VIII, p. 565.

[112] For the *ʾAjâʾib ad-Dunyâ* (Bursa Hüsein Çelebi Kütüphanesi, Ms. 746, ff. 63b–64b), see R. Şeşen (ed. trans.), *El-Cahiz, Hilâfet Ordusunun Menkibeleri ve Türkler'in Fazîletleri* (Ankara, 1967), p. 32; *Aḫbâr az-Zamân wa man abâdahu'l-Ḥidṯân*, ed. H. ʿAsî (Beirut, 1386/1966), pp. 98–99. See also discussions in D.M. Dunlop, *Arab Civilization to A.D. 1500* (New York, 1971), p. 110; T. Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography. The Histories of Masʿûdî* (Albany, 1975), pp. 154–155.

[113] Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, ed. De Goeje, p. 220.

[114] Ibn Ḥawqal (Beirut ed.), p. 330; Yâqût, Muʿjam (Beirut ed.), II, p. 367.

[115] See V.F. Minorsky, "The Khazars and the Turks in the *Âkâm al-Marjân*" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, (1937), p. 142: "their supreme king professes the Jewish faith." For the *Risâla* see Şeşen, *El-Cahiz*, pp. 33–35: "their supreme king professes Judaism . . . Most of them practice Islam."

[116] See Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REBs*, 53 (1995), p. 240. On the relationship of the "Cambridge [Schechter] Document" to Ḥasdai's correspondence, see Golb, Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*, esp. pp. 94–95

perhaps from the 950s)[117] and the "Cambridge Document" are, indeed, authentic. What we have are copies (as Golb suggests), perhaps from an 11th century codex of Ḥasdai's diplomatic correspondence.[118]

The "Cambridge Document" has many controversial points, which we need not consider at this moment, focusing, instead, on the conversion narrative contained within it. Jews are said to have arrived in Khazaria from or via Armenia at some unstated time (perhaps as early as the period of persecution unleashed by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610–641) in the early 630s).[119] In Khazaria they intermingled with the Khazars while preserving, apparently imperfectly, elements of their ancestral faith. Subsequently, one of the prominent Jewish military leaders, coaxed by his devout wife and father-in-law, began to espouse more vigorously a form of Judaism more closely adhering to traditional Jewish norms. This angered the Byzantines and the Muslims. It was at this stage that this "great chief" (*ha-sar ha-gadol*) called for a religious disputation to settle the roiling religious question. In its aftermath (the conclusions are nowhere clearly stated), the Khazar officers called for Jewish books which had been kept in a "cave in the plain of *Tyzwl* (תיזול). These were produced and the explanations offered by the "sages of Israel" proved critical. "Then," we are told, "returned Israel, with the people of Qazaria, (to Judaism) completely" and Jews began to emigrate to Khazaria from Iran, Iraq and Byzantium. This strengthening of religious faith also led to centralization of a hitherto diffused form of government ("there was no king in the land of Qazaria; but rather whoever would achieve victories in war would they appoint over themselves as chief officer of the army").

---

[117] It survives in a Long and a Short Redaction, the manuscript of the Long Redaction (Firkovič Collection) is from the thirteenth century and the Short Redaction [Christ Church, Oxford] from the sixteenth century, see Kokovcov, *Perepiska*, p. xi; Golb, Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*, p. 76.

[118] See Dunlop, *History*, pp. 116 ff.; Golb, Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*, pp. 75–95 and the recent discussion by Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REB*, 53, (1995), pp. 239 ff. Yehudah b. Barzillai, ca. 1090–1105, in his *Sefer ha-ʿIttim* notes that he had seen Joseph's letter. He offers, however, a disclaimer, stating that "we do not know if the letter is genuine or not and if it is a fact that the Khazars, who are Turks (lit. "sons of Togarmah"), became proselytes . . ." see Kokovcov, *Perepiska*, Heb. text, pp. 127–128/Russ. trans., pp. 128–131; Dunlop, *History*, p. 157. Golb (*Op. cit.*, p. 77) suggests that all these texts may well have come from the Cairo Geniza or other "repositories of old Hebrew manuscripts in the same city."

[119] The Jews were blamed for the earlier fall of Jerusalem to the Sâsânids. On Heraclius's anti-Jewish policies (including forced baptisms), see W. Kaegi, *Heraclius. Emperor of* Byzantium(Cambridge, 2003), pp. 29, 79–80, 216–218; Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REB*, 53, (1995), p. 241.

Now, they "appointed over them one of the sages" who is called *kagan* (כגן) i.e. *Qağan*.[120] Constantine Zuckerman, who has most recently analyzed this text, suggests that the notion of a "return" to Judaism was a means of getting around the potential divisions between Jews and converts. It was, "a practical way to save the cohesion of the Khazar people." Moreover, the primitive, "bookless" Judaism that had existed up to this time finds parallels in the characterization of Khazar beliefs found in the *Vita Constantini*,[121] although Khazar religious beliefs described briefly in that text could just as easily be a reference to the Tengri cult.

Joseph's response to Ḥasdai's letter contains another version of the conversion narrative. In it, the Khazar king (*melek̲*) Bulan, "a wise and God-fearing" man drove out the "sorcerers and idol-worshippers." Having received two heaven-sent dreams as a result of his strivings and having then convinced this heavenly apparition to appear to the "great chief" (*ha-sar ha-gadol*, if Bulan is the *Beg*, then obviously this would be the Qağan)[122] to win him over, he then gathered together his "princes, slaves and his entire people" and they converted to the new faith. A third angelic visitation produced a request that he build a temple and assured him military success in a raid on Azarbayjan as a means to gather the necessary funds. Byzantium and the Muslim rulers, having learned of this (clearly there were pro-Byzantine and pro-Muslim factions at the court), sent him gifts and tried to win him over. A religious disputation followed in which Judaism prevailed. The conversion is said to have taken place 340 years before Joseph's time. Some generations after Bulan, during the reign of Obadiyah, the kingdom was "renewed" and the faith strengthened according to traditional Jewish norms.[123]

Al-Muqaddasî (writing ca. 985) describes Khazaria as "a broad district beyond the (Caspian) sea, (a land of) squalor and woe, of many sheep,

---

[120] See text and translation in Golb, Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*, pp. 106–114.

[121] Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REB*, 53, (1995), pp. 242, 244.

[122] Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REB*, 53, (1995), p. 252.

[123] Kokovcov, *Perepiska*, Heb. text, pp. 21–24, 28–31/trans. pp. 75–80, 92–97. The dating is only noted in the Long Redaction. See also Pritsak, "Conversion" *HUS*, II (1978), pp. 272–276. Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REB*, 53 (1995), pp. 249–250, has suggested that Obadiyah may be a later interpolation. He is not mentioned in Jehuda b. Barzillai's summary. I have also previously ("Khazaria and Judaism" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, III (1983), pp. 147–148) expressed the opinion that the Obadiyah episode may be nothing more than a "pious topos." On the other hand, his activities do fit into the Eurasian conversion pattern, see below.

honey and Jews."[124] The Khazar state was mortally wounded by the Rus' campaigns (in alliance with the Oğuz) of 965–969. In this notice, if it is a reflection of the situation at the time of al-Muqaddasî's writing, we find evidence that there were still large numbers of Jews in Khazaria. On the other hand, he also notes in his description of the "Khazar," the Khazar capital on the Volga, that its inhabitants had earlier moved to the sea coast (i.e. the Caspian?) and then returned. "They converted to Islam since they had earlier been Jews."[125] This clearly refers to the time after the Rus'-Oğuz overrruning of the city. Muslims had, in all likelihood, comprised the majority—or at least plurality—of the population of the capital. After the disasters of 965–969, many Jews and Judaized Khazars had undoubtedly fled the city. Those that remained appear to have converted to Islam. The continuing existence of Khazar Jewish communities, however, may be seen in the account of the Rus' chronicles of the series of religious interrogations conducted by the ruler of Kiev, Vladimir I, in 986 who declined Volga Bulğar Muslim, Khazar Jewish and German Catholic invitations to accept their faiths before converting to Orthodox Christianity.[126]

An-Nadîm, writing ca. 987–988, in a notice on the script systems used by the "Turks and those related to them," comments that "the Khazars write Hebrew."[127] An echo of this theme is found in Faḫr ad-Dîn Mubârakšâh (ca. 1206) who, in a notice clearly conflated from several sources, states that the "Khazars also have a script which is derived from that of the Rûs, a branch of the Rûm who live near them. They write in this script and are called Rûm-Rûs. They write from left to right, the letters are not joined. There are twenty-two letters all together (and no more). The greater part of these Khazars who use this script are Jews."[128]

A Sunnî *qâḍî*, ʿAbd al-Jabbâr b. Muḥammad al-Hamdânî of Rayy (Iran) in a polemical work directed against the Ismâʿîlîs and other Shîʿites as well as the Christians written ca. 400/1009–1010, cited the Khazar

---

[124] Al-Muqaddasî, ed. De Goeje, p. 355.

[125] Al-Muqaddasî, ed. De Goeje, p. 361. On the dating of the Rus' campaigns, see I.G. Konovalova, "Padenie Xazarii v istoričeskoj pamjati raznyx narodov" *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Vostočnoj Evropy 2001* (Moskva, 2003), pp. 171–190.

[126] *Polnoe sobranie russkix letopisej* (Moskva-St. Peterburg/Petrograd/Leningrad, 1843–1995), I, cc. 84–85. Judging from the text these were not local, Kievan Jews, but Jews who came from the Khazar lands.

[127] An-Nadîm, *Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, I, p. 20, Dodge trans. I, pp. 36–37.

[128] *Taʾrîkh-i Fakhruʾd-Dîn Mubârakshâh*, ed. E. Denison Ross (London, 1927), p. 46; see also V.V. Bartolʾd (Barthold), "O pismennosti u xazar" in his *Sočinenija*, V, p. 466.

conversion, which he placed "recently in the days of the ʿAbbâsids and during their rule" as an example of a bellicose, violent people who were converted by a single proselytizer using the power of argument rather than military force.[129] The individual is left unnamed.

Al-Bakrî (scr. 1086, d. ca. 1094) has a longer notice for which he, obviously, drew on a number of sources: "in general, the Khazars are Muslims and Christians. Among them are (also) idolators. The smallest of the groups among them is the Jews.[130] Their king professes the Jewish faith." Having been first a pagan (*majûs*) and then a Christian, he "saw the wrongness of his what he believed" and convened a religious disputation "between the three Peoples of the Book (*aṣhâb al-kitâb*)." A learned local Jew bested the Christian bishop in debate and then had someone poison his Muslim opponent. Thus, "the Jew won the king's favor (*istimâla*) to his religion and he became a Jew."[131]

Interestingly enough, it is one of our latest sources, Yehudah Halevi, who, in the opening lines of his famous defense of Judaism written in Arabic in 1140 (the *Kitâb al-Ḥujjâh wa'd-Dalîl fî Naṣr ad-Dîn aḏ-Ḏalîl* or more popularly *Kitâb al-Ḫazarî*, it was translated into Hebrew, in 1167 by Yehudah Ibn Tibon, the *Sefer Ha-Kuzarî*), says that having been asked to "provide refutations" to defend Rabbinical Judaism, he remembered "the arguments of the rabbi who studied with a Khazar king, who converted to Judaism some four hundred years ago."[132] His contemporary, Abraham ibn Daud, writing in the 1160's confirms the interest in Khazar matters among Iberian Jewish intellectuals. He mentions the Khazar Jewish community as part of the larger Rabbinical, as opposed to Qaraite, community, knows of the Khazar Hebrew correspondence and even remarks that "we have seen some of their descendants in Toledo, scholars who informed us that their legal practice conforms to Rabbanite

---

[129] See the *Kitâb Taṯbît Dalâ'il Nubuwwat Sayyidinâ Muḥammad* and discussion in S. Pines, "A Moslem Text Concerning the Conversion of the Khazars to Judaism" *Journal of Jewish Studies* 13 (1962), pp. 45–55, Arabic text (in transcription), p. 55, Eng. trans. p. 47. The notice reads: "One of the Jews undertook the conversion of the Khazars (who) are (comprised of) many peoples, and they were converted by him and joined his religion."

[130] Al-Bakrî's original text has: *wa ahl al-firq minhum al-yahûd* which the editors (see below) have restored to *wa aqall al-firaq minhum al-yahûd* ("and the smallest of the groups among them is the Jews") from Al-Iṣṭaḫrî (ed. De Goeje, p. 220): *wa aqall al-firaq al-yahûd*.

[131] Al-Bakrî, *Kitâb al-Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik*, ed. A.P. van Leeuwen, A. Ferre (Beirut, 1992), I, pp. 446–447.

[132] Yehuda Halevi, *The Kuzari. In Defense of the Despised Faith*, trans. N.D. Korobkin (Northvale, New Jersey-Jerusalem, 1998), p. 1.

usage."[133] The Khazar Hebrew correspondence is also noted by the somewhat older Yehuda ben Barzillay of Barcelona (ca. 1090–1105), who, however, was less certain about its authenticity and indeed of the fact of the Khazar conversion.[134]

Despite the overwhelming evidence of the written sources, archaeological evidence for Judaism is hard to come by. One of the brick buildings in Sarkel (a fortress-trade center on the Don built with Byzantine assistance in 840–841)[135] may have been a synagogue, but this is by no means certain. There are no other traces of Judaic or Christian belief in that complex that have been uncovered thus far.[136] Warrior graves with Jewish symbols are found at Čelarevo (70 km. from Belgrad) in Yugoslavia. These may have been Qabar. Given the absence of Jewish, Christian or Muslim religious paraphernalia in the Khazar sites investigated thus far, Pletnëva concluded that paganism remained the "unifying religion" of Khazaria.[137] There can be little doubt that paganism was an important element in Khazar culture and probably a significant substratal element in the religious beliefs of those that converted to one or another of the monotheistic religions. But, one must ask, are we to expect much religious paraphernalia in a relatively recently converted steppe society? Do the Oğuz, in the century or so after their Islamization, present much physical evidence in the steppe for their new faith? These conclusions must be considered preliminary. Archaeology has not yet revealed all of

---

[133] Abraham Ibn Daud, *Sefer Ha-Qabbalah. The Book of Tradition*, ed. trans. G.D. Cohen (Philadelphia, 1967), Eng. trans. pp. 92–93/Heb. pp. 67–68.

[134] Kokovcov, *Perepiska*, Heb. text, pp. 127–128/Russ. trans., pp. 128–131; Dunlop, *History*, p. 132.

[135] On the dating of the construction of Sarkel, see now C. Zuckerman, "Two Notes on the Early History of the *Thema* of Cherson" *Byzantine and Modern Greee Studies* 21 (1997), pp. 213–214.

[136] There is some evidence of human sacrifice, obviously associated with pagan cults, see S.A. Pletnëva, *Sarkel i "Šëlkovyj Put'"* (Voronež, 1996), pp. 78–80.

[137] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, pp. 215–217. On the Čelarevo finds, see also Vl. Petrukhin, "The Decline and Legacy of Khazaria" in P. Urbanczyk (ed.), *Europe Around the Year 1000* (Warsaw, 2000), pp. 112–113. A recent summation of the Čelarevo complex by R. Bunardžič, "Čelarevo—nekropol' i poselenie VIII–IX vekov" in *Xazary*, ed. V. Petruxin, V. Moskovič et al. in *Evrei i Slavjane* 16 (Ierusalim-Moskva, 2005), pp. 522–531, dates the finds to the late eighth-early ninth centuries, notes the Judaic objects in the finds, connects them with one of the three groupings represented there, a people with "northern Mongolian" physical characteristics, but is not prepared to declare them Khazar. It seems unlikely, however, to view them as "late Avar" with which they may correspond chronologically as we have no evidence regarding the spread of Judaism to the Avars.

its secrets, as Petruxin has noted in his "afterword" to Pletnëva's book.[138] Most importantly, the Khazar capital remains undiscovered.[139]

Dating and Impact of the Conversion

The dating of the conversion remains a matter of scholarly dispute. Dunlop, after an exhaustive analysis of the Arabic and Hebrew sources, concluded that "sometime before 112/730, the leading Khazars may have come under the influence of Judaism." In the aftermath of a religious debate, ca. 740, the Qağan accepted "a modified Judaism" and in 800, moved to full Rabbinical Judaism.[140] A cautionary note should be sounded here. In 733, when Constantine Copronymus married Čiček, the daughter of the Qağan, the Byzantine sources make no mention of Khazar Judaism (although, as was noted previously, they consistently ignored it) nor do we find reference to it in the Georgian Life of St. Abo who was in Khazaria in 786 or in the Arab accounts of the marriage of al-Barmaqî, governor of Arminiyya and Aḏarbâyjân in 798/799, to a daughter of the Qağan.[141] Pritsak also viewed this as essentially a three-staged process, the first movement towards Judaization taken ca. 730–740, with a second stage coming during the era of Hârûn ar-Rašîd, ca. 799–809 and a final stage ca. 837–843. The second stage he associates with the reforms of Obadiyah noted in Joseph's letter which he terms "the official conversion of the beg." The third stage came at the conclusion of the Khazar civil war (the revolt of the Qabars, discussed below), which forced the Qağan to accept Judaism.[142] Dieter Ludwig, following these same stages of Judaization, concluded that by the time of Constantine's mission (860) the preponderance (*Übergewicht*) of Jews at the Khazar court indicates that the conversion of the Khazar elite to

---

[138] Pletnëva, *Očerki*, pp. 227–230. Petruxin attributes the "elusiveness" of Khazar Judaic monuments to both the incompleteness of the Khazar archaeological record and to the "thin stratum" of Jewish adherents.

[139] Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, ed. De Goeje, p. 220, says that the Khazar capital had some thirty mosques for its Muslim inhabitants.

[140] Dunlop, *History*, chaps. v–vi, conclusions on p. 170.

[141] See I. Sorlin, "Le problème des Khazares et les historiens soviétiques dans les vingt derniéres années" *Travaux et mémoires* (Centre de Recherche d'histoire et civilisation byzantines), 3 (1968), p. 441.

[142] Pritsak, "Conversion" *HUS*, II (1978), pp. 278–280.

Judaism had been accomplished, probably sometime before 835–840.[143]

Artamonov also viewed this as a "long, sometimes unnoticed process" in which the intermingling of Jews with Khazars played a greater role than preaching. The process began, he suggests in Daghestan, one of the early centers of the Khazars. The "culprits" (*vinovniki*, an interesting choice of words) in this process were local Daghistanian Jews. He also points to the old Jewish settlements in the Crimea and Taman peninsula (Phanagoria) whose numbers had grown thanks to Byzantine persecutions under Heraclius and Leo III (717–741). A Daghestanian setting for the conversion, however, is complicated by the absence, thus far, of any Jewish cultic objects in the various Khazar sites that have been examined in that region. It should also be added that there are no contemporary traces of Islam either. Local chronicles, toponyms and popular legends, however, do point to old, Pre-Judeo-Tat Jewish settlements and these may go back to Khazar times.[144]

Following al-Masʿûdî, Artamonov points to the late eighth-early ninth century as a particular turning point. In his interpretation, the *Vita Constantini* clearly shows that the Khazars were Judaized. He further argues that the conversion to one of the acceptable monotheisms of Western Asia, given Khazar involvement with both Byzantium and the Caliphate, was a necessity in the aftermath of the events of 737. Faced with either Christianity or Islam, they chose Judaism as a middle way out. It gained them "entry into the circle of medieval civilization and at the same time secured them an independent status" between the competing Christian and Muslim states. There were also domestic needs, a new ideology to meet the requirements of "new forms of socio-economic relations." Although a good choice as a demonstration of independence, Artamonov says that Judaism, with its non-proselytizing character was poorly suited to compete with the younger faiths, Christianity and Islam.[145] The notion that Judaism provided a neutral status between Byzantium and the Islamic World as well as securing commercial relations across the Mediterranean is an old one, going back to the Russian Eur-

[143] Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft*, I, pp. 161–163. Since he dates (pp. 328–332) the letter of Christian of Stavelot to a period ca. 835–840 or "a little later," the conversion of the Khazars must have occurred before that.

[144] Magomedov, *Obrazovanie*, p. 173. There is nothing but conjecture to sustain the thesis that the Khazars converted to the *Maġâriyya* sect of Judaism in the Caucasus, see D. Lang, "A Kazárok zsidósága" *Magyar Nyelv*, XLIV (1948), pp. 37–42.

[145] Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, pp. 262–273.

asianist school.[146] But, if Judaism here was non-proselytizing, how were the Khazars converted?

In point of fact, conversions of elites or large-scale conversions to Judaism were not very common, but not unknown, e.g. the conversions of the Idumaeans and the Ituraeans in the late second century B.C.E., the Judaization of the ruling elites of Adiabene (in present day Northern Iraq) in the mid-first century C.E. and of the Ḥimyârî kings in Yemen (perhaps as early as the fourth century C.E.) and the incorporation of Berber elements into North African Jewry in medieval times.[147] In Medieval Europe, Jewish policies regarding proselytism varied with time and place, depending on local and external conditions.[148] A frontier zone like Khazaria, at the interstices of the great Eurasian and West Asian trade routes and the cultures and religions that traversed this zone borne by merchants and others, was precisely a region in which Judaism, unfettered by Christian or Muslim overlords who prohibited Jewish proselytizing, could freely compete.

Novoseľcev dates Khazar interest in monotheistic faiths to the seventh century (e.g. the mission of bishop Israyêl noted earlier). He discounts the notice of the Qağan's conversion to Islam in 737, noted only by Ibn Aʿṯam al-Kûfî and al-Balâḏurî, as reflecting a not very reliable oral tradition that was not repeated by more discriminating authors such as aṭ-Ṭabarî, al-Masʿûdî and Ibn al-Aṯîr among others. The Muslim sources fix Judaism as the state religion in Khazaria by the 850–870's. Novoseľcev considers al-Masʿûdî's notice as the only one "worthy of belief." Beyond that, the sources do not permit a more exact dating

[146] See the comments of G. Vernadskij (Vernadsky), *Opyt istorii Evrazii* (Berlin, 1934), pp. 51–52.

[147] A. Schalit (ed.), *The Hellenistic Age: Political History of the Jewish People from 332 B.C.E. to 67 B.C.E.* (The World History of the Jewish People, 1st series, vi, New Brunswick-Jerusalem, 1972), pp. 217–224; J.R. Rosenbloom, *Conversion to Judaism from the Biblical Period to the Present* (Cincinnati, 1978), pp. 94–98. On Jewish proselytism in Antiquity see L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton, 1993), chap. 9. On the Jews of Arabia, see G.D. Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia From Ancient Times to Their Eclipse Under Islam* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1988), esp. chap. 4; H.Z. Hirschberg, "The Problem of the Judaized Berbers" *Journal of African History*, 4 (1963), pp. 313–339. The origins of Ethiopian (Falasha) and Chinese Jewry (the now nearly completely absorbed Kai-feng community) are inexplicable without reference to converts.

[148] See brief discussion of the differing schools with reference to the Khazar question in Golden, "Khazaria and Judaism" *AMAEe*, III (1983), pp. 132–134. On conversions in Western Asia and Europe, see P. Wexler, *The Ashkenazic Jews. A Slavo-Turkic People in Search of a Jewish Identity* (Columbus, Ohio, 1993), pp. 181 ff.

of the event. He attributes the process of conversion to the *Išâd/Beg* who forced the Qağan to accept Judaism. Islam and Christianity were excluded because of political complications whereas, in his view, the Jews, on whom the Carolingians and Spanish Umayyads looked with special favor, "monopolized European trade," controlling the transit trade between Europe and Asia. Khazaria attracted Jews fleeing persecutions in Byzantium and emigrants from the Caliphate. The Jewish colonies in the Crimea were also significant. Nonetheless, based on a selective reading of the Muslim sources, Novoseľcev concludes that Jews comprised the smallest grouping of those espousing monotheistic faiths in Khazaria. Judaism and Jewish culture (including literacy in Hebrew) had some impact, but so did Islam which in the tenth century was gaining ground and was the religion of the royal army.[149]

Most recently, Constantine Zuckerman has argued for the primacy of the *Vita Constantini* in dating the conversion. He dismisses al-Masʿûdî's notice as a "somewhat confused resumé of a more detailed account in a work which is no longer preserved," but holds open the possibility of rehabilitating him in light of the revival of Jewish traditions noted in the Cambridge Letter.[150] Why al-Masʿûdî should be confused about his own work and what elements of confusion are to be found in his account are not spelled out. Rather, Zuckerman says that since only one religious debate took place (the Cambridge Document and the *Vita Constantini* are describing one and the same event), in 861, the conversion must have occurred not long after the debate. Conversion was in one stage, at the initiative of Bulan, the *Beg*/Military chief. It was probably prefaced by some individual conversions (this may be the background to al-Masʿûdî's notice). Zuckerman contends that "the spread of Judaism among the Khazars was, in reality, more gradual and slower than the Cambridge Document would admit (though in no way limited to the upper class). He concludes, however, that it had only a "limited penetration" among the Khazars.[151] Finally, he suggests that "the link between the conversion and the new mode of government, as established in the *Genizah Letter*, appears to be wholly justified."[152]

---

[149] Novoseľcev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 144–154.

[150] Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REB*, 53 (1995), pp. 246, 250.

[151] Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REB*, 53 (1995), pp. 244–245, 250.

[152] Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REB*, 53 (1995), pp. 252–253; see also his "O proisxoždenii dvoevlastija u xazar i obstojateľstvax ix obraščenija v iudaizm" *Materialy po arxeologii, istorii i étnografii Tavrii* IX (2002), pp. 521–534. J. Shepard, "The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism and Byzantium's Northern Policy" *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, n-s. XXXI (1998), pp. 13–14 essentially follows Zuckerman's dating.

The linking of the dual kingship in Khazaria with Judaization has appeared over the years in a number of variants. Artamonov placed the emergence of the dual kingship in the early ninth century and connected it with the activities of Obadiyah, to whom he attributed the imposition of full Rabbinical Judaism and a coup d'état that reduced the Qağan to a largely ceremonial position.[153] This produced the revolt of the Qabars.[154] The Qağan was also compelled to convert to Judaism. This form of governance did not derive from Judaism, but was, he suggests, an innovation resulting from the replacement of one ruling dynasty by another.[155]

Pletnëva identified Obadiyah with the unnamed Khazar ruler (the Qağan in her view) mentioned in al-Masʿûdî's notice as converting to Judaism. The consequence of this Judaization of the Qağan, *Beg* and Itil aristocracy, she argues, was to alienate the ruling clique from the rest of the Khazar aristocracy which resulted in a power struggle between the non-Judaized provinces and the capital. Pletnëva concluded that Obadiayah was among those who perished in this "Khazarian Fronde" and the state itself was weakened.[156]

Pritsak also placed the emergence of the *Beg* to sometime after 799 but before 833 when the *Beg*[157] is shown playing an important role in foreign affairs (the building of Sarkel). The *Beg*, who, he conjectures, is the major domo from the Iranian *Barč/Warâz/Bolčan clan, is identified with Obadiyah and the Khazar ruler who converted during the reign of Hârûn ar-Rašîd. This *Beg* forced the Qağanal clan to convert to Judaism, producing the "Judaization of the institution of the Khaghanate," according to which only a Judaized Khazar could hold that position (cf. al-Iṣṭaḫrî). Pritsak dates the Qabar revolt (a reaction in his view to Judaization) to between 833 and 843 (or 835), by which time the Qağan "had lost all power" and had, indeed, been compelled to Judaize as well.[158]

---

[153] Cf. Ibn Faḍlân/Togan, Arab text, pp. 43–46/trans. 139–140; al-Masʿûdî, *Murûj*, ed. Pellat, I, pp. 212, 214–215; Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, ed. De Goeje, p. 224 etc.

[154] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, trans. R.J.H. Jenkins (Washington, C.D., 1967), pp. 174/175: "The so-called Kabaroi were of the race of the Chazars. Now, it fell out that a secession was made by them to their government, and when a civil war broke out their first government prevailed, and some of them were slain, but others escaped and came and settled with the Turks in the land of the Pechenegs . . ."

[155] Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, pp. 275, 280–282., 324 ff.

[156] S.A. Pletnëva, *Xazary* (2nd ed., Moskva, 1986), pp. 62–66.

[157] See Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *DAI*, pp. 182/183: ὁ πὲχ Χαζαρίας.

[158] Pritsak, "Conversion" *HUS*, II, (1978), pp. 278–280 and his "Turkological Remarks

As for the much-debated question of the dating of the conversion, we now have some new evidence that gives added weight to al-Masʿûdî's notice. It has become clear that the Khazars in the early ninth century minted coins, perhaps in response to a decline in Muslim minting in the 820s. The Khazar coins were invariably imitations of Islamic dirhams. However, they included, in some instances, the inscription *arḍ al-ḫazar* ("Land of the Khazars"), Turkic *tamğa*s and some dirhams with the most striking formula (for imitation Islamic coins): *Mûsâ rasûl Allâh* "Moses is the Messenger of God," a clear substitution for the Islamic *Muḥammad rasûl Allâh*. The five "Moses dirhams" uncovered thus far have been dated to 837/838 on the basis of die-chains.[159] There can be little question that, at the least, the governing strata of Khazaria had been Judaized by this time—perhaps relatively recently so (as al-Masʿûdî indicates) and wanted to dramatically and visibly assert this new religious profile in the turbulent 830s. Coins were important ideological symbols and in the medieval "Age of Faith" projected the official religion of the state or at least that of its ruling group.

As I have noted elsewhere, the institution of a dual kingship, often encompassing a sacral king as well, is a widespread phenomenon in Eurasia—indeed worldwide.[160] There is nothing but conjecture to connect it with the reforms of Obadiyah, the further evolution of Khazar Judaism or the Qabars (who may have had Judaic elements in their midst). The fact is we do not know when, precisely, the Khazar system of dual kingship emerged. It could not have come *ex nihilo*. It was not present in the early stages of Khazar history. Given the Old Türk traditions of the Khazar state (described in al-Iṣṭaḫrî and mirroring the same investiture ceremonies depicted in the Chinese sources for the Türks)[161] and the overall institutional conservatism of steppe society, one must exercise great caution here. Clear evidence for it is relatively late (the latter part of the ninth century perhaps and more probably the tenth

---

on Constantine's Khazarian Mission in the *Vita Constantini*" in E.G. Farrugia et al. (eds.), *Christianity Among the Slavs. The Heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius* in *Orientalia Christiania Analecta*, 231 (Roma, 1988), pp. 295–298.

[159] R.K. Kovalev, "What Does Historical Numismatics Suggest About the Monetary History of Khazaria in the Ninth Century?—Question Revisited" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 13 (2003), pp. 106–114 and his "Creating Khazar Identity through Coins: The Special Issue Dirham of 837/8" in F. Curta (ed.), *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, 2005), pp. 220–253.

[160] See Golden, "Khazaria and Judaism" *AEMAe*, III (1983), pp. 147–149 and the literature cited there.

[161] Al-Iṣṭaḫrî, ed. De Goeje, p. 224; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, I, p. 8.

century—although it was probably present by the first third of the ninth century. Iranian influences via the Ors guard of the Qağans may also have been a factor.[162] These were societies that were not given to political experimentation or innovation. Finally, why would Jewish "reformers" create a sacral monarchy still laden with pagan elements?[163]

Judaization, however, would certainly play a role in how the Qağanate presented itself to Jewish audiences (such as Ḥasdai b. Šaprûṭ) and the Islamo-Christian world. Over time it also became internalized.

Internalization

Pritsak has suggested that Joseph's letter represents the "official version of the proselyte dynasty" and the Cambridge Document is an "unofficial version of indigenously Jewish circles."[164] DeWeese, however, cautions us that "Khazar converts might be just as likely to assert their ancestral links with Jewish tribes as immigrant Jews would have been to assert their primacy in bringing the religion to the Khazars." Indeed, these two accounts show a creative synthesis of the two traditions, Khazar paganism and Judaism.[165] Zuckerman contends that the Khazars created, in effect, a myth of a Khazar "return" to Judaism, so that the various stages of Judaism could be presented as a revival and the unity of the converts and Jews maintained.[166] One would hardly expect otherwise. This is an important element in the internalization of the new religion. Clear evidence that the Khazars were doing this can be found in the Kievan Khazar Hebrew letter. Turkic shamans (*qam*), it would appear, could become *kôhêns* and Levites, as Golb has suggested. This was part of what he terms "the construction or gradual evolution of a mythic substratum justifying and explaining the conversion." The "sacerdotal metamorphosis"

---

[162] See P.B. Golden, "The Khazar Sacral Kingship" *Pre-Modern Russia and Its World*, ed. K. Reyerson, Th. Stavrou, J. Tracy, Schriften zur Geistesgeschichte des östlichen Europas (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), pp. 79–102

[163] See also the comments of V. Ja. Petruxin, "K voprosu o sakral'nom statuse xazarskogo kagan: tradicija i real'nost' " *Slavjane i ix sosedi* 10 (2001), pp. 73–78, who suggests (p. 77) that Judaization may have "desacralized the status of the earthly ruler—he became the embodiment of the Law, but not a Divinity." In any event, Judaism did not shape or alter the qağanal office.

[164] Golb, Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*, p. 132.

[165] DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, p. 305.

[166] Zuckerman, "On the Date" *REB*, 53, (1995), pp. 241–242.

of individuals or groupings from the old shamanic element that had previously conducted sacrifices for the community perfectly accords with this new world view.[167]

Another manifestation of this synthesis of old and new can be seen in the cave motif in the conversion narratives. The ethnogonic myth of the Türks centered on the ancestral cave in which the Ashina were conceived from the mating of their human ancestor and a wolf ancestress. The Ashina-Türks, from whose western ruling branch the Khazar ruling house most probably derived, continued to offer sacrifices at the ancestral cave.[168] As DeWeese has noted, this myth and ritual complex became highly politicized during the period of the Second Türk Empire and it would be surprising "not to find echoes of this complex among the Khazars." Moreover, "the complex of mountains, sea and cave" of the Cambridge Document mirrors that of other Inner Asian ethnogonic myths.[169]

Clearly the notion of a "return" to Judaism had been internalized and is reflected in the conversion narratives. Joseph, while placing the genealogy of himself and his people, as descendants of Japheth, in a context that would be familiar to Ḥasdai, also notes that the eponymous "Khazar," was one of the ten sons of Togarmah from whom Jews of the Middle Ages understood the Turks to derive.[170]

The "reforms" of Obadiah, if they are not a pious interpolation, also fit into the familiar pattern of conversion and internalization. After several generations (in some groupings considerably longer), the new faith has not only supplanted and covered over the more obvious elements of the old religion, but has, inevitably, produced those learned enough in its precepts to desire to bring it into full conformity with the "proper" laws and traditions of the faith. We are moving, using Eaton's model, from inclusion to displacement.

Some Conclusions

Conversion probably took place in stages. It began, as so often was the case, at the top, with the ruling house, perhaps episodically as early as

---

[167] Golb, Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*, pp. 27–29.
[168] Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, I, p. 5; Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 15.
[169] DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 300–305.
[170] Kokovcov, *Perepiska*, Heb. text, p. 19/trans. 72, where he titles himself "the Turkic king" (*ha-melek̲ ha-togarmî*), pp. 20–21/74.

the mid-eighth century (certainly after 737), but not extending at that stage much beyond the ruling strata. Some important stage must have been reached by the era of Hârûn ar-Rašîd, as reported by al-Masʿûdî. The "Moses coins" clearly reflect the growing weight at the top political levels of society. This was also a period of conflict with Byzantium which was trying to strengthen the Christian presence in Khazaria. The now overt movement towards Judaism may have represented a critical shift in foreign policy. Perhaps, the Byzantine contribution to the building of Sarkel (ca. 840–841) was not only to deal with threats in the steppe (Hungarians and perhaps more distantly, Pečenegs), but also to win favor with the Khazar governing elite? The conversion of the Khazar ruling elite to Judaism could not have been welcome news in Constantinople.

Conversion at the top does not necessarily mean immediate mass conversion. We may note here the example of the Činggisid Khan Berke (1257–1267), ruler of the Jočid *ulus* who converted to Islam before his accession and was followed by other Islamized rulers, but the movement of important, critical sectors of this *ulus* to Islam occurred only after the conversion of Özbek Khan (1312–1341). At the time of Constantine's mission, the Qağan may have still been willing to entertain other religious systems or at least appear to do so, although Jews and Judaized elements within the immediate ruling strata, were most probably already guiding the internal dialogue on this question. By the latter part of the ninth century and early tenth century, Judaism, at least within the core tribes, was becoming more widespread, hence the notices in Ibn al-Faqîh ("all of the Khazars are Jews, but, they have been Judaized recently") and Ibn Faḍlân ("the Khazars and their king are all Jews"). In the history of religious conversion in the steppe this is what one would expect to find. Moreover, these sources directly contradict the assertion by Artamonov and others that Judaism was limited only to the ruling elite and "never became the religion of the Khazar people or more precisely those tribes that formed Khazaria."[171] On the contrary, Khazar Judaism may have also begun to reach subject or allied peoples. Thus, Seljukid tradition accords Old Testament names (Mîkâ'îl, Isrâ'îl, Mûsâ and Yûnus) to the sons of Seljuk, whose father Toqaq Temür Yalığ, according to some accounts, was in the service of the Khazar Qağan.[172]

---

[171] Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, p. 266.

[172] C. Cahen, "Le Malik-Nameh et l'histoire des origines Seljukides" *Oriens*, II (1949), pp. 31–65. See also Dunlop, *History*, pp. 258–261.

The conversion narratives give differing versions regarding the actual agents of conversion, the Khazar Jewish accounts emphasizing its "internal" sources, i.e. stemming from Khazar Jews who have recovered their ancestral faith. Pritsak has suggested that the Khazars, like their contemporaries, the Uyğurs, were introduced and converted to these universalistic faiths (Judaism and Manichaeanism respectively) by long-distance merchants.[173] With the Uyğurs this is certainly true. Like the Türks before them, they had developed a symbiotic, political, cultural and economic relationship with the Soġdians, the great culture-bearing merchants along the Silk Route. Did Jewish merchants, who appear to have been outnumbered in the Khazar capital by the large Muslim community, play a similar role? Were the local Jewish merchants affiliated with the Râḏânîyya? Our sources provide no clear-cut answer. Trade and the spread of religions and the cultural paraphernalia associated with them (e.g. script systems) do seem to be connected across Eurasia,[174] and it is not implausible to posit a similar kind of connection in Khazaria. But, this is not an absolute certainty. These powerful royal courts invariably attracted "holy men" of non-commercial origins who proselytized because they believed they were doing the bidding of their God. Later Jewish sources, beginning in the thirteenth century (Nachmanides) mention the still elusive figure of Isaac Sangarî who is credited with converting the Khazar king.[175] Of course, in any number of instances, the holy man and merchant could be one and the same. The tradition of debates or royal interrogations is also well established in the Inner Asian conversion paradigm.[176]

The "reform" movement inaugurated by Obadiyah, if, indeed, true, similarly follows the conversion paradigm of Inner Asian peoples: nom-

[173] Pritsak, "Conversion" *HUS*, II (1978), pp. 280–281.

[174] Cf. the studies by Bentley, *Old World Encounters*. On the interplay of religion and commerce, see Xinru Liu, *Silk and Religion* and P. Risso, *Merchants and Faith. Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean* (Boulder, Colo., 1995).

[175] Those who contend that the Khazars converted to Qaraism maintain that Sangari was a Byzantine Qaraite, see discussion in Dunlop, *History*, pp. 122–125; Ş. Kuzgun, *Hazar ve Karay Türkleri* 2nd ed. (Ankara, 1993), pp. 151 ff.; S. Szyszman, *Le Karaïsme* (Lausanne, 1980), p. 71; R. Freund, *Karaites and Dejudaization*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion, No. 30 (Stockholm, 1991), pp. 38–39. Recent archaeological investigations have completely undermined this theory, see D. Shapira, "Yitshaq Sangari, Sangarit, Bezalel Stern, and Avraham Firkowicz: Notes on Two Forged Inscriptions" *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 12 (2002–2003), pp. 223–260

[176] DeWeese, *Islamization*, pp. 169–173.

inal conversion, backsliding followed by a renewal and deepening of the faith along with bringing it more into conformity with the norms of that faith, the pattern, as DeWeese terms it, of "summons, consent, test and decisive affirmation."[177] The Khazar conversion, seen in its Eurasian context, does not, in fact, appear so exceptional.

The impact of the Khazar conversion in terms of Khazaria's relations with its neighbors is also difficult to assess. It has been claimed that after the conversion, Constantinople devoted more efforts to the Caucasus and the Rus' danger. Indeed, Judaization, never mentioned in the Byzantine chronicles, in effect ended the Khazaro-Byzantine *entente*. Others contend that no real change occurred.[178] It is clear from Constantine Porphyrogenitus's *De Administrando Imperio* that in his day Byzantium was relying more on the Pečenegs as an instrument of policy in the steppe. This, however, may have been the normal consequence of the Khazar decline. There is no overt indication of a religious issue, the Byzantines remaining remarkably silent on this question. This silence may itself tell us much about the Byzantine reception of the growing Judaization of the Khazars. The Byzantines had failed to bring the Khazars into Christendom. This was a foreign policy defeat and undoubtedly the source of some resentment in Constantinople. As for the Islamic world, with which the Khazars had a contentious early history, we have only the report from Ibn Faḍlân that the Khazar king destroyed the minaret of the Friday mosque in Atıl in retaliation for the destruction of a synagogue in Dâr al-Bâbûnaj. The king is alleged to have said that he would have done worse if not for fear of Muslim retaliation against Jews.[179] The persecutions of Jews by the Byzantine emperor, Romanos Lekapenos,

---

[177] DeWeese, *Islamization*, pp. 302, 314–315.

[178] G. Huxley, "Byzantinochazarika" *Hermathena*, 148 (1990), p. 85. J. Shepard, "The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism and Byzantium's Northern Policy" *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, n.-s., XXXI (1998), pp. 11–34, posits a mass conversion of the Khazars taking place after 860 which was "disappointing and humiliating," a "spectacular blow to the Byzantine establishment's ambitions for the north-east of the Black Sea," all of which led to persecutions of the Jews under Basil I (867–886). The Jewish persecutions of the tenth century by Romanos Lekapenos grew out of domestic, not foreign political needs—with unpleasant consequences for Byzantium in the North. Nonetheless, Constantinople continued to cooperate with Khazaria when it was in its interests to do so. Shepard concludes that the conversion did not reorient Byzantine policy. Nonetheless, Khazaria's increasingly Judaic profile, perhaps strengthened by the presence of Byzantine Jewish refugees at the qağanal court "came to have a significant, if oblique, impact on the Byzantine programme of defensive imperialism."

[179] Ibn Faḍlân/Togan, Arab. p. 45/trans. 102–104.

resulted in attacks on Christians in Khazaria.[180] Clearly, the Khazar ruler, by this time, saw himself as a defender of the Jews.

Centuries after the fall of Khazaria as a major power (965–969), there are obscure references in some documents from the Cairo Geniza to messianic ideas or movements associated with Khazaria.[181] "Jewish" Khazaria retained some symbolic value, but had long since ceased to be a reality.

[180] Al-Masʿûdî, *Murûj* ed. Pellat, I, p. 212. On the complexities of this era, see N. Golb, O. Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century* (Ithaca, 1982), pp. 80, 90, 104, 114–115.

[181] See Dunlop, *History*, pp. 254–256.

BYZANTINE SOURCES FOR KHAZAR HISTORY

James Howard-Johnston

The Khazars built up their authority in the middle years of the seventh century in the steppes north of the Caucasus. What little reliable information can be gleaned from written sources about their rise to power—and it is very little—is closely examined by Constantine Zuckerman elsewhere in this volume. The date which he establishes for their achievement of regional hegemony, in the 660s, is as precise and secure as we can hope for. It is plain too that they achieved military parity or near-parity with the nascent power of the Caliphate south of the Caucasus in the course of the next twenty years, since, probably with Byzantine encouragement, they were able to launch a successful invasion of Transcaucasia in 685.[1] But we remain in the dark about how they gained the edge over the numerous neighbouring nomad tribes who had, like them, formed part of the Turkish empire, the first to straddle the eastern and western Eurasian steppes, from the 550s to *ca*. 630. Over thirty years of obscurity passed between the sudden implosion of the Turkish empire, triggered by a violent competition for power at the centre, and the recreation by the Khazars of a stable, supratribal authority in the outer reaches of its long-abandoned western territory.[2] Sedentary observers, such as the early ninth century Byzantine chronicler Theophanes, simply reported the outcome (in a longish, chonologically vague and rather garbled notice).[3]

There is no doubt, however, of the durability and political importance of the Khazar khaganate. The half-century after 685 during which it confronted the Caliphate across the Caucasus on more or less equal

---

[1] C. Zuckerman, 'The Khazars and Byzantium—The First Encounter'. Chronological precision is obtainable, as he shows, from R.H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak (AŠXARHAC'OYC'). The Long and the Short Recensions*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients, B. 77 (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 55–57A.

[2] T.J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier. Nomadic Empires and China* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 131–45; P.B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 127–36.

[3] Theophanes, p. 358 (full bibliographical details in n. 10 below).

terms, eventually fighting a long war of fluctuating fortunes between 708 and 737,[4] also probably saw concerted military efforts to extend Khazar authority over nomad tribes and sedentary peoples in a broad zone of the steppes and wooded steppes, beyond the Don, Donets and Volga rivers which framed the core territory of the khaganate to the south, in the Kuban and Kalmyk steppes.[5] The Khazars achieved the status of a great power by the early eighth century, the third acknowledged great power of the Near East alongside the Caliphate and Byzantium. They also inaugurated two and a half centuries of political stability in western Eurasia, in the course of which, it can be argued, any major development affecting the broad swathe of territory between the Ural and Dniepr rivers was either initiated by the Khazars or effectually managed by them.

The Khazars exercised considerable influence in three regions which were of great strategic importance to Byzantium in the early middle ages. The continuing threat which they posed to Transcaucasia, after as well as before the single serious defeat inflicted on them in 737 by the Arabs, diverted the attention of the Arab authorities from the relatively easy avenues of invasion leading across Armenia towards the eastern rim of the Anatolian plateau. The main flow of Arab colonists into Transcaucasia ran due north from Mesopotamia to Atropatene (Persian Azerbaijan) and thence on to Albania (ex-Soviet Azerbaijan). Arab investment in military infrastructure in the north was concentrated not in the upper valleys of the Araxes and Euphrates from which attacks could be launched west against Byzantium, but well to the east, at the great fortress of Darband guarding the easiest passage through the Caucasus (by the Caspian shore) and in the Kur plain, where several bases were established to secure the southern approaches to the Caucasus.[6] Byzantium and the khaganate shared common interests in a second large arena of diplomacy, the Pontic steppes. Both regarded the small but formidably well-organised and well-defended Bulgar state established in the north-east Balkans as an inveterate adversary.[7] Finally both great

[4] D.M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, 1954), pp. 58–87; D. Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches im Licht der schriftlichen Quellen* (Münster, 1982), pp. 136–8, 146–54; A.P. Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo* (Moscow, 1990), pp. 177–87.

[5] S.A. Pletneva, *Ocherki khazarskoj arkheologii* (Moscow, 1999).

[6] J. Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886*, rev. M. Canard (Lisbon, 1980), pp. 210–4; W. Madelung, 'The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran', in R.N. Frye, ed., *Cambridge History of Iran*, IV (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 226–8.

[7] D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (London, 1971), pp. 63–8; Golden, *Introduction*, pp. 244–53.

powers had interests, in this case conflicting interests, in the Crimea, which, by virtue of its proximity to the khaganate's heartland across the straits of Kerch, clearly fell within the Khazar sphere of influence, but was of no less concern to Byzantium by virtue of its maritime position, within easy striking distance of the north coast of Asia Minor and of Constantinople itself.[8]

It is reasonable therefore to look to Byzantine sources for a steady flow of information about the Khazars, throughout the three centuries of the khaganate's existence. Such information might be expected to be of high quality, given a continuing concern for chronological precision and a historical tradition which prized accurate transmission of information as much as its literary embellishment and elaboration. Bitter disappointment awaits the historian. Very little is reported of the khaganate and the odd titbits of information supplied are entirely disconnected from one another.

I

One of the most striking features of early medieval Byzantium was a sudden, drastic historiographical decline in the middle of the seventh century.[9] For the next three centuries, information must be gleaned normally from two relatively thin historical traditions. The first pair of texts are the *Short History* of Nikephoros, tentatively dated to the 780s, the work of a young man primarily concerned to give a literary face-lift to a small number of accessible sources, and the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, a much more scholarly work completed in 813/4, which may draw on a wider range of sources but which often duplicates that of Nikephoros.[10] For the following period, most of the ninth and the first half of the tenth century, the two main narrative accounts which survive are sharply opposed to one another in tone, a court-sponsored history organised by imperial reigns (commonly known as the Continuation of Theophanes, covering the period 813–961) confronting a polemical,

[8] Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, pp. 28–31.

[9] Michael Whitby, 'Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality', in Averil Cameron & L.I. Conrad, ed., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, I *Problems in the Literary Source Material* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 25–80.

[10] Nikephoros of Constantinople, *Short History*, ed. & tr. C. Mango, CFHB 13 (Washington, D.C., 1990); *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1883–5), tr. C. Mango & R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford, 1997).

often scurrilous brand of history (the so-called Logothete's Chronicle), which, from the *putsch* of Basil I in 867, turns into an anti-history of the ruling Macedonian dynasty and carries on to 948.[11] The military heyday of Byzantium, under the rule of Romanos II (959–63), Nikephoros Phokas (963–9) and John Tzimiskes (969–76) is likewise covered by two contrasting sources, the classicising history written by a near-contemporary, Leo the Deacon, and the terse chronicle of John Skylitzes compiled a century later, which includes a hostile account, in the Logothete's vein, of the preceding sole reign of Constantine Porphyrogenitus (945–59).[12]

This is meagre stuff to compare with the rich and variegated historiographical traditions of Islam for the same period. At certain points, indeed, the two meagre trickles are reduced to one: Theophanes' account of the recent past cannot be controlled once Nikephoros' *Short History* gives out in 769 (save for two substantial fragments of a lost narrative of early ninth century events);[13] the anti-history of the Macedonian dynasty holds sway from 886 to the end of 944, to the extent of taking over the corresponding section of the Continuation of Theophanes and leaving us no favourable or even neutral account of the reign of Leo VI (886–912), the short-lived regime of his brother Alexander (912–3) or the long nominal rule of Constantine Porphyrogenitus (913–44);[14] finally, there is but one extensive account of Basil II's reign (976–1025), that put together by Skylitzes with the concerns of his eleventh-century

[11] *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838). There is no critical edition of the universal chronicle attributed to Symeon Logothete, but a good early manuscript of the text (*Monacensis gr.* 218, dating from the eleventh century) is edited by T.L.F. Tafel as *Theodosii Meliteni qui fertur Chronographia*, Monumenta Saecularia, K. Bayer. Ak. Wiss., III Classe, 1 (Munich, 1859). I have left out of account the last intemperate part of a second universal chronicle dating from the middle of the ninth century (*Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, ed. C. de Boor, rev. P. Wirth, 2 vols. [Stuttgart, 1978]) and a short higher-style history of the period 813–886 written by Joseph Genesios, which covers much the same ground and uses many of the same sources as Theophanes Continuatus but is an altogether slighter work (*Iosephi Genesii Regum Libri Quattuor*, ed. A. Lesmüller-Werner & H. Thurn, CFHB 14 [Berlin-New York, 1978], tr. A. Kaldellis, *Genesios on the Reigns of the Emperors*, Byzantine Australiensia 11[Canberra, 1998]). None of them has material on the Khazars not present in the main traditions.

[12] *Leonis Diaconi Historiae*, ed. C.B. Hase, CSHB (Bonn, 1828), tr. M.M. Kopylenko, *Lev Diakon Istorija* (Moscow, 1988); *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. J. Thurn, CFHB 5 (Berlin-New York, 1973).

[13] The first fragment is edited and translated by I. Dujčev, 'La chronique byzantine de l'an 811', *TM* 1 (1965), pp. 210–17; the second is edited (with Latin translation) by I. Bekker in an annexe to his edition of *Leonis Grammatici Chronographia*, CSHB (Bonn, 1842), pp. 335–62.

[14] Theophanes Continuatus, pp. 353–435.

readership very much in mind.[15] Within this restricted historical tradition, attention is normally confined to court politics, to doctrinal controversy, to the wars against Arabs and Balkan Bulgars upon which the fortunes of Byzantium depended, and to unusual natural phenomena. Distant peoples and places only feature when they impinged directly on capital and court or when they engaged the personal attention of the emperor.[16]

If we discard a first passage in which Theophanes (p. 315) mistakenly equates the Turks with the Khazars, on the occasion of the formers' decisive military intervention in Transcaucasia in 626–7,[17] the Khazars are mentioned only rarely in their own right. Nikephoros (ch. 35) and Theophanes (p. 358), clearly drawing on a common source, refer in passing to their rise to power in the course of digressions on the origins of the Balkan Bulgars—passages which, as Constantine Zuckerman demonstrates, maul historical reality.[18] Theophanes goes on later to pick out three campaigns in which the Khazars worsted the Arabs: their invasion of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 730, in the course of which they defeated and killed the Arab military governor of the north, Djarrāh b. ʿAbdallāh, near Ardabil;[19] their containment of the counterthrust north of the Caucasus by Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik in 731;[20] and an attack in force in 764 which caused extensive damage in Transcaucasia.[21]

---

[15] Skylitzes, pp. 314–69, with the comments of C.J. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire, 976–1025* (Oxford, 2005), ch. 4.

[16] H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, I, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft XII.5.1 (Munich, 1978), pp. 243–78, 333–57, 367–71, 389–93 for general remarks on Byzantine historical writing and detailed notices on the texts itemised above. Cf. R. Browning, 'Byzantine Literature', *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, II (New York, 1983), pp. 505–21.

[17] J. Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire, 622–630', *War in History*, 6 (1999), pp. 1–44. Cf. Zuckerman, 'First Encounter'.

[18] Zuckerman, 'First Encounter'.

[19] Theophanes, p. 407 dates it one year too early: Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo*, p. 181 and n. 131. There is a remarkably detailed account of this episode in *The History of Lewond*, ch. 18, tr. Z. Arzoumanian (Philadelphia, 1982), pp. 107–8.

[20] Theophanes includes duplicate notices of this campaign, the first under 729/30 (p. 407), the second correctly placed under 731/2 (p. 409). Cf. Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo*, p. 182. These notices, like that on the 730 attack and a brief report of the Byzantine-Khazar marriage alliance of 732/3 (discussed below), were lifted from Theophanes' West Syrian source, now commonly attributed to Theophilos of Edessa (R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 13 [Princeton, 1997], pp. 400–9, 656–7).

[21] Another probable instance of a doublet in Theophanes: it is surely the same invasion

Coverage of Byzantine-Khazar relations is limited to five isolated reports in Byzantine historical sources. The first two probably derive from a lost biography, critical in tone, of the Emperor Justinian II. According to a notice in Theophanes (pp. 372–3) which is closely parallelled in Nikephoros (ch. 42), he escaped from Cherson (to which he had been exiled in 695) and was granted political asylum by the Khazars in 704. He married the khagan's sister and was allowed to live at Phanagouria (Tmutarakan), before being forced to flee when Byzantine political pressure persuaded the khagan to have him executed. The story is picked up later in both Theophanes (pp. 377–80) and Nikephoros (ch. 45). Justinian, who had recovered his throne in 705 with the backing of the Balkan Bulgars, bore a grudge against the inhabitants of Cherson, Bosporos (Kerch) and the other *klimata* (districts). In 711 he sent a large punitive expedition to the Crimea which was responsible for many atrocities and was then wrecked on the voyage home. Fear of what he might do in future was not allayed by a temporary softening in his stance, and Cherson along with the other Crimean forts appealed for military aid to the Khazars. This arrived in time to relieve Cherson under siege by a second expeditionary force, which then changed sides, joined the Khazar-sponsored rebellion of Vardan, commander of a naval detachment left behind by the first expedition, and sailed off to help depose Justinian.[22]

The third notice is a brief report (Theophanes, pp. 409–10, Nikephoros, ch. 63) of a second Khazar-Byzantine royal alliance, the marriage in 732/3 of Constantine, son and heir of the reigning Emperor Leo III, to the daughter of the khagan.[23] Over a hundred years then pass before

---

which is reported under 763/4 (p. 433—probably the correct date) and 764/5 (p. 435)—*contra* Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 189–90 and Laurent, *Arménie*, p. 210 and n. 130; the target is given as Armenia under 763/4, here probably designating the whole of Muslim Transcaucasia, and Georgia under 764/5. A detailed list of the devastated districts which lay in northern Azerbaijan and eastern Georgia, is given by Lewond, ch. 31, pp. 125–6, who knows of only one expedition. Considerable weight should be attached to this notice of Lewond's, since, as is shown by T.W. Greenwood, *A History of Armenia in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries* (D.Phil., Oxford, 2000), ch. IV, it was probably taken from a documentary source.

[22] Cf. C. Head, *Justinian II of Byzantium* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1972), pp. 99–107, 142–6.

[23] Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik & R.J.H. Jenkins, CFHB 1 (Washington, D.C., 1967), ch. 13.122–46 refers to the marriage which flouted his rule that the imperial house should not ally itself with northern peoples, but supposes that it involved Constantine's son, the future Leo IV (775–80). He explains it away as an aberration of a heretical emperor for which he was anathematised posthumously.

the next fleeting glimpse is given of the khaganate (Theophanes Continuatus, pp. 122–4): the khagan and *pech* of the Khazars sought and obtained Byzantine technical assistance for the construction of a brick fortress on the lower Don (840–1).[24] The notice does not explain either why the Khazars wanted a Roman-style fortress or what was its intended function (whether as a primarily defensive installation or as a base for the forward projection of Khazar power into the steppes or wooded steppes beyond). The episode seems to have caught the chronicler's attention because the project was personally approved by the reigning emperor, Theophilos, and because it led to the imposition of direct Byzantine rule on the south-west Crimea (on advice given by the head of the Don expedition on his return). The fifth and last notice to be found in a Byzantine historical text dates from some fifty years after the conventionally assumed demise of the khaganate: it is a bald record (Skylitzes, p. 354) of Basil II's dispatch of a fleet against Khazaria in 1016, and of the subsequent subjection of the country in a joint campaign with the Rus.[25]

This shamefully thin historical record can be fleshed out slightly with the aid of two saints' lives, letters written by two patriarchs of Constantinople, and two pieces of documentary material. One source, though, is being left out of account for the moment—the misnamed *De Administrando Imperio*, dating from the middle of the tenth century, which is more forthcoming and which alone gives the Byzantinist some *locus standi* in Khazar studies.

A crisis in relations between the Khazars and the Goths of the south-west Crimea is noted in the Life of John Bishop of Gothia, which only survives in a short epitome. John, an obdurate iconophile, who had recently visited Constantinople (during the patriarchate of Paul, 780–4), is portrayed as taking a leading role in opposing the extension or intensification

[24] Dating: C. Zuckerman, 'Two Notes on the Early History of the *thema* of Cherson', *BMGS* 21 (1997), pp. 210–5. Site: S.A. Pletneva, *Sarkel i "shelkovy" put'* (Voronezh, 1996).

[25] The reading Khazaria is secure (no manuscript variants are noted by the editor) and presumably originated with Skylitzes himself. However, there is an implausibility about the episode as reported by him: Khazaria was evidently easily accessible by sea and the Khazar ruler, who was captured, bears a Christian name, George Tzoules. It looks as if Skylitzes has confused the coastal region of Kasakhia on the edge of the Caucasus (*De Administrando Imperio*, ch. 42.99–102) with the territory of the Khazars. Kasakhia was indeed attacked by the Rus from Tmutarakan around this time, but their commander was Mstislav, son of Vladimir, not Vladimir's brother, Sphengos, as in Skylitzes (S. Franklin and J. Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200* [London-New York, 1996], pp. 200–1).

of Khazar authority over Gothia, the mountainous country immediately to the east of Cherson. He went so far as to expel the garrison installed in his see, Doros (Mangup). Doubtless under increasing Khazar pressure, the Goths then gave up resistance and handed John over. After these events (datable to the period 784–7), John was detained for some time in prison but succeeded eventually in escaping across the Black Sea to Amastris, where he died around 790.[26] The Life of Constantine, future missionary to Moravia, composed by a disciple in Slavonic between 869 and 882, casts another shaft of light into the local history of the Crimea in 861: Constantine was a member of an embassy on its way to the Khazar court, which interrupted its journey for some time at Cherson; conditions were evidently unsettled, since hostile Khazar and Hungarian forces were operating in the Crimea during his stay; Constantine is credited with halting a Khazar siege of an unnamed Christian town and with securing the embassy's safe passage past a marauding Hungarian band. The embassy thus made its way safely to the Khazar capital, where a formal doctrinal disputation was staged and the main diplomatic business was transacted. A treaty was negotiated, under the terms of which two hundred Byzantine prisoners-of-war were released and permission was given for Christian missionary work on Khazar territory. The hagiographer reveals the strong position already achieved by Judaism in the khaganate in the extended account which he gives of the second and main debate between Constantine and certain Jews who evidently enjoyed high favour at court.[27]

Byzantine sources are niggardly with information about subsequent Christian missionary activity in the khaganate. Only two episodes are reported, in both of which Crimean archbishops took a leading role. The first involved the conversion of Jews living in the episcopal see of Bosporos (Kerch), within a few years of the Khazar authorisation of Christian

[26] *Acta Sanctorum Iunii*, V (Antwerp, 1709), pp. 190–4 (at 191). Modern discussions: G. Huxley, 'On the *Vita* of St John of Gotthia', *GRBS* 19 (1978), pp. 161–9; M.-F. Auzépy, 'Gothie et Crimée de 750 à 830 dans les sources ecclésiastiques et monastiques grecques', *MAIET* 7 (Simferopol, 2000), pp. 324–31 (at 328–9).

[27] Kliment Okhridski, *S'brani S'chinenija* III, ed. B.S. Angelov & Kh. Kodov (Sofia, 1973), pp. 95–103, tr. F. Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (rev. ed., Prague, 1969), pp. 358–71. Modern discussions: C. Zuckerman, 'On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus Oleg and Igor', *REB* 53 (1995), pp. 237–70 (at 241–50); S. Nikolov, 'The Magyar Connection or Constantine and Methodius in the Steppes', *BMGS* 21 (1997), pp. 79–92; J. Shepard, 'The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism and Byzantium's Northern Policy', *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 31 (1998), pp. 11–34 (at 11–18).

proselytising on their territory. Antony, Archbishop of Bosporos, was congratulated on his success, in a short but elegantly phrased letter written by Photios, almost certainly during his first tenure of the patriarchate (858–67).[28] The next news of Christianity in Khazaria comes from two letters written by Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos more than fifty years later. On this occasion, it was more a matter of shoring up than extending the Christian position. A new archbishop of Cherson was instructed to pay a visit of inspection to Khazaria before taking up his appointment, and to perform certain duties on behalf of the faith, including the ordination of priests, while he was there. He carried out the assignment satisfactorily, was duly installed in his own see, and was then, in the second half of 920, invited to nominate a candidate as archbishop of Khazaria and to send him to Constantinople for consecration.[29]

These fleeting glimpses of Byzantine propagation or backing of Christianity in Khazaria cannot stand comparison with the detailed narrative of an earlier mission carried out from south of the Caucasus among the north Caucasus Hun subjects of the Khazars. Insight into the beliefs and ritual practices of Turkic nomads in the period of Khazar hegemony, as also into the techniques of conversion, is best obtained from Movses Daskhurants'i's account of Bishop Israyēl's experiences and activities in 681–2.[30]

Finally (if, as indicated above, discussion of the *De Administrando Imperio* is postponed to a later stage), there are the two documentary sources to consider. An ecclesiastical province of Gothia, which was roughly coterminous with the khaganate and contained eight episcopal sees, features in a list of bishoprics loosely datable to the eighth and ninth centuries. The metropolitan see was Doros. The suffragans included Astel (the Khazar capital Itil) and Tamatarcha (Tmutarakan), and three

[28] Photius, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, *ep.* 97, ed. B. Laourdas & L.G. Westerink, I (Leipzig, 1983), p. 132. I follow V. Grumel & J. Darrouzès, *Les regestes des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, I. 2–3 (Paris, 1989), p. 125, no. 515 in dating the letter to Photios' first patriarchate, rather than C. Zuckerman, 'Les Hongrois au pays de Lebedia:une nouvelle puissance aux confins de Byzance et de la Khazarie ca. 836–889', in N. Oikonomides, ed., *Byzantium at War (9th–12th c.)* (Athens, 1997), pp. 51–74 (at 68–9) who connects it with Basil I's later drive (datable around 873) to baptise Jews living on Byzantine territory, using a mixture of inducements and coercion (for which see G. Dagron, 'Le traité de Grégoire de Nicée sur le baptême des Juifs', *TM* 11 [1991], pp. 313–57).

[29] Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letters* 68 & 106, ed. & tr. R.J.H. Jenkins & L.G. Westerink, CFHB 6 (Washington, D.C., 1973), pp. 314–5, 388–91.

[30] *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranci*, tr. C.J.F. Dowsett (London, 1961), ii. 39–42, pp. 153–68.

serving named peoples, the Khotzirs, Onogurs and Huns. It is likely that this ecclesiastical organisation only materialised for a short time on the ground, at a time well before the middle of the ninth century when Judaism was gaining the upper hand within the khaganate and its governing elite.[31] A second document lists the correct forms of address for the full range of foreign rulers within Byzantine diplomatic horizons during the period of effective rule by Constantine Porphyrogenitus (945–59) and makes it clear that the khagan of the Khazars was still recognised as the leading potentate in the north. He is accorded more honorific epithets than the leading rulers of sedentary peoples in the Caucasus region—the curopalate of Iberia, the *exousiokrator* of Alania and the *exousiastes* of Abasgia. Heavier golden bulls (equivalent to three solidi) were attached to letters sent to him than to those three neighbouring rulers, who were entitled to two-solidi bulls (as were Byzantium's other principal northern correspondents—the ruler [*archon* in the singular] of the Rus and the rulers of the Hungarians [Turks] and Pechenegs).[32] This piece of documentary information thus undercuts Novosel'tsev's contention that the khaganate was in serious decline by the middle of the tenth century and that this was registered in Byzantium.[33]

Before turning to the evidence of the *De Administrando Imperio*, it will be useful to take stock of the material from Byzantine sources surveyed so far. It cannot be emphasised enough how limited this body of material is. Little light is cast on the geographical extent, the economy and the institutions of the khaganate. There is no first-hand Byzantine account of a journey across any part of the khaganate, to match Ibn Fadlān's record of his travels and observations in 921–2, when he served on a caliphal embassy to a client-ruler of the Khazars, the *yil-tawar* of the Volga Bulgars.[34] The classical tradition of geographical writing had

[31] J. Darrouzès, ed., *Notitiae Episcopatuum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Paris, 1981), *Not*. 3.611–8, pp. 241–2. Auzépy, 'Gothie' is inclined to discount Darrouzès' view (p. 32) that the list was formed by a process of *bricolage* out of disparate materials of divergent dates, and to view it rather as an official list of real sees, dating from the period 787–*ca*. 830. Shepard, 'The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism', pp. 18–20 dates the project to set up a network of sees (and their brief institution) somewhat later, and associates it with the construction by the Byzantines of the fortress of Sarkel and the introduction of direct rule to the south-west Crimea in 840–1.

[32] *Constantini Porphyrogeniti Imperatoris De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ii. 48, ed. J.J. Reiske, CSHB (Bonn, 1829–30), I, pp. 687–8, 690–1.

[33] Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 33, 219.

[34] Ibn Fadlān, *Voyage chez les Bulgares de la Volga*, tr. M. Canard (Beirut, 1981).

withered away in Byzantium. There are no texts analogous to the series of voluminous, wide-ranging Arab geographies composed in the tenth and following centuries.[35] It may be true that the same information about the Khazars and their neighbours is recycled and reworked, in tune with each author's conceptions, in source after source.[36] But it is only on the basis of the material in Ibn Fadlān and Arab geographical texts that modern historians have been able to piece together a picture both of the scale of Khazar power (embracing some twenty-five subordinate peoples) and the constitutional arrangements through which it was articulated (sovereign political and religious authority, embodied in the person of the khagan, being separated from executive power which was entrusted to the *khagan beg* and his deputy, the *kundu khagan*). It is again Arab sources which outline the military and fiscal systems of the khaganate, incidental references in Byzantine sources merely adding some supplementary information about local government at Phanagouria and in the Crimea.[37]

It is hard to reconstruct Khazar-Byzantine relations over the long term.[38] It is plausible to suggest that the two powers concerted their efforts to undermine Islam's grip on Transcaucasia during and after the second Arab civil war (684–92). But there is no explicit statement to this effect in any Byzantine source. Indeed the only solid evidence of intercommunication before or after the crisis in their relations occasioned by Justinian II at the beginning of the eighth century is the notice about the marriage of the future Constantine V to a Khazar bride in 732/3. It is not unreasonable to infer that Byzantium and the khaganate were bound together in an active military alliance at a time, the 730s, when the existence of both was menaced by Islam.[39] But it is quite impossible to tell whether this Byzantine-Khazar axis survived into the second half

[35] Hunger, *Literatur* I, pp. 505–42; S. Maqbul Ahmad, 'Djughrāfiyā', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, rev. ed., II (Leiden, 1965), pp. 575–87.

[36] A. Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Budapest, 1999), pp. 67–72, 295–6.

[37] Ibn Fadlān, tr. Canard, pp. 51–2, 67–9; Ibn Rusteh, *Les atours précieux*, tr. G. Wiet (Cairo, 1955), pp. 156–7; A.P. Martinez, 'Gardīzī's Two Chapters on the Turks', *AEMA* 2 (1982), pp. 109–217 (at 152–5). Cf. Ludwig, *Struktur*, *passim*, Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 100–44 and Golden, *Introduction*, pp. 239–41.

[38] Cf. T. Noonan, 'Byzantium and the Khazars: A Special Relationship?', in J. Shepard and S. Franklin, ed., *Byzantine Diplomacy* (Aldershot, 1992), pp. 109–32.

[39] Cf. M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025* (London, 1996), pp. 225–6.

of the eighth century, when the new Abbasid dynasty posed a yet greater threat. Such evidence as may be gleaned about local conditions in the Crimea suggests that relations may have been difficult at times. Bishop John's visit to Constantinople shortly before the outbreak of trouble in Gothia in the 780s may fuel suspicion that he had official encouragement in his anti-Khazar agitation.

Nothing is known about relations over the following fifty years, save for the existence at some point of eight episcopal sees in the khaganate, one of them in the capital, Itil, another probably that founded long before by Israyel among the north Caucasus Huns. It does not follow from this Christian presence on Khazar soil that there were close political ties with Byzantium. The first such indication comes with the tale of Petronas' mission to construct the fortress of Sarkel on the lower Don, an episode picked out probably because the project had the active support of the reigning emperor and because the Khazars, in a reciprocal gesture of goodwill, seem to have allowed Byzantium to impose direct rule on Cherson and neighbouring districts in the Crimea. It is an isolated notice in Theophanes Continuatus (parallelled at *De Administrando Imperio*, ch. 42.22–55). It would be wrong to assume that Byzantine technical assistance was limited to a single project because only one project is mentioned in Byzantine sources. This is a historiographical silence of no force atall, and cannot be used as an argument against the archaeological data which suggest to Gennadii Afanas'ev and Valery Flerov that Sarkel may have been part of a larger programme involving the construction of several other fortresses in the basins of middle and lower Don.[40]

The valuable contribution of this snippet of written Byzantine information is a precise date (840–1) for the construction of a key component of this new network of Khazar fortresses facing north and west. It then becomes relatively easy to answer the crucial question—what new circumstances led the Khazars to improve this sector of their perimeter defences and to initiate what looks like a rapprochement with Byzantium. For the period between 820 and 840 saw a change in the political configuration of western Eurasia of immense importance—the consolidation of Rus power in northern Russia and their first exploitation of the enticing waterways leading south towards Khazar territory and the Caspian and

[40] G. Afanas'ev, 'Archaeology of the Khazar Problem' and V. Flerov, 'The Fortifications of the Khazar Khaganate . . .'. Cf. Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, p. 176.

Black Seas.[41] Perception of the potential danger posed by the Rus was surely the prime motivation for the development of a new system of forward bases, which could, of course, play a defensive role but which were probably designed with a more offensive purpose in mind—to extend Khazar authority to a wide intermediate zone of the steppes and wooded steppes beyond the core territories of the khaganate (thereby barring or at least braking Rus expansion) and, if possible, to exercise some influence over the Rus themselves. The impressive defences of the fortresses, geometrically planned, built of limestone or brick, with towers at regular intervals, were, it may be surmised, designed to overawe a northern adversary unfamiliar with southern military engineering skills.[42]

Very little useful information can be extracted from Byzantine sources about relations with the khaganate in the last century of its existence. We may know, thanks to the one and only Byzantine report of an embassy sent to Itil, that negotiations took place in 861. We may observe that the embassy was dispatched soon after the first Rus attack on Constantinople. We may surmise that the prime objective was to prevent any repetition through Khazar good offices. But we are left entirely in the dark as to whether or not the Khazars had a hand in organising the attack.[43] Equal uncertainty hangs over the next great crisis affecting Byzantium in the north, in the 890s—the collapse of Leo VI's anti-Bulgar policy when his own army was defeated and his allies, the Hungarians, were driven from the Pontic steppes by a Bulgar-Pecheneg alliance.[44] We may suspect that the Pecheneg action was authorised by the Khazars, since it entailed crossing or passing close by the core territories of the khaganate, but there is no way of confirming this. The greatest historiographical failure came, however, in the tenth century. The turbulent, often antagonistic relations between the khaganate and Byzantium detailed in the *Genizah Letter*, are passed over in perfect silence.[45] No hint is dropped

[41] Franklin & Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 3–50; M. Kazanski, A. Nersessian & C. Zuckerman, ed., *Les centres proto-urbains russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient* (Paris, 2000).

[42] Cf. W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival 780–842* (Stanford, 1988), p. 313 and Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 131–2. Alternative explanations are canvased by Whittow, *Orthodox Byzantium*, pp. 233–5 and Zuckerman, 'Les Hongrois', pp. 51–5.

[43] Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, pp. 182–3; Franklin & Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 50–6.

[44] J. Howard-Johnston, 'Byzantium, Bulgaria and the Peoples of Ukraine in the 890s', *MAIET* 7, pp. 342–56.

[45] Zuckerman, 'On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion', pp. 254–68.

that the Khazars sponsored the second, more dangerous Rus assault on Constantinople and its hinterland in 941. Not one word is written about the co-ordinated campaigns of Rus and Oghuz Turks which broke the power of the khaganate in the 960s.[46]

Historians naturally look to Byzantium, which kept a wary eye on developments in the northern world, for at least an outline of the main developments there in the first half of the tenth century. It is surely not unreasonable to be shocked to find so little reported, even on topics as important to Byzantines as their dealings with several of the leading powers of the region—Rus and Hungarians as well as Khazars. However, the loss felt most keenly by the latterday observer is the failure of Byzantine sources to trace the evolving relations of Rus and Khazars. Little trust can be placed in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, narrowly focused as it is on Kiev and so coloured by hindsight,[47] and it is impossible to extract a considered estimate of the balance of power from Arab historians and geographers. We are therefore left to conjecture whether or not the Khazars exercised a general, light oversight over the widely separated Rus principalities of the Volga and Dniepr basins in the ninth century and whether or not they succeeded in maintaining it deep into the tenth century. I incline to think that they did so (flimsy and indirect though the evidence be), and that the history of early Rus cannot be understood properly unless it be placed in a context of Khazar power projected deep into the northern world.[48]

II

The *De Administrando Imperio* (henceforth cited as *DAI*), a handbook of diplomacy enriched with a wide range of historical and antiquarian material, is by far the best Byzantine source of information about the Khazars. Considerable authority may be attributed to it, since it reached its final form, in 952, in the hands of the reigning emperor, Constantine Porphyrogenitus.[49] The Khazars feature in the first and second sections,

---

[46] Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 219–31; V.Ja. Petrukhin, *Nachalo etnokul'turnoj istorii Rusi IX–XI vekov* (Smolensk, 1995), pp. 102–6.

[47] Whittow, *Orthodox Byzantium*, pp. 245–8.

[48] J. Howard-Johnston, 'The *De Administrando Imperio*: a Re-examination of the Text and a Re-evaluation of its Evidence about the Rus', in *Les centres proto-urbain russes* (above, n. 41), section V.

[49] Annotation is kept as spare as possible in this section. Full commentaries on the

dealing with Byzantium's policy towards its northern neighbours at the time of writing. They also lurk as a shadowy presence influencing the ninth-century episodes which are described in some detail much later in the body of the text and which feature Pechenegs and Hungarians as principal protagonists.

Before taking a closer look at these various passages, we must examine the text as a whole. This is, of course, an elementary procedure, which must be followed in the case of any source before it is put to historical use. Specific pieces of information must not be torn out of context. Positive arguments must be deployed before confidence is placed in their accuracy. The more important the potential contribution of a source, the more care must be taken in its critical evaluation, the more effort must be made to understand it as a whole.[50]

The *DAI* must be scrutinised with scrupulous care for a second reason. It is a very odd text, with several puzzling features. (i) It is untidy. Raw notes co-exist with properly edited material. There is a fair amount of duplication. There are surprising juxtapositions and sudden jumps. It may possess the formal characteristics of a completed work—an appropriate preface and a table of contents which tallies with its main component parts—but much remained to be done on the editing of its substance when work on it halted. (ii) It contains very little written in a way likely to engage the attention of its principal intended reader, Constantine's fourteen-year-old son Romanos, apart from some anecdotal material. And it was badly designed for its ostensible purpose of educating the boy, save for the opening two sections (ch. 1–13) which first reduce Byzantium's northern diplomacy to simple rules of thumb and then supply arguments for rejecting requests by northern peoples for grants of Byzantine regalia, the recipe for Greek Fire, or marriage alliances with the imperial family. (iii) It has a curious structure. There is no denying that as a whole it is a ramshackle piece of writing. Thus philological jottings on the name Iberia, or a detailed breakdown of

---

DAI have been published in English and Russian: R.J.H. Jenkins, ed., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio*, II *Commentary* (London, 1962); G.G. Litavrin and A.P. Novosel'tsev, ed., *Konstantin Bagrjanorodny, Ob upravlenii imperiej* (Moscow, 1989). Unless indicated otherwise, the following observations on Byzantium's relations with northern peoples tally with the conclusions of Zuckerman, 'On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion' and Whittow, *Orthodox Byzantium*, who provide the necessary references to the primary sources.

[50] The following general remarks about the *DAI* summarise the detailed argumentation of Howard-Johnston, '*De Administrando Imperio*'.

contributions in cash and horses from the Peloponnese in lieu of military service in southern Italy, or a full narrative of the ups and downs in the history of Bosporos in late antiquity have very little to do with the main diplomatic subject. Nonetheless there is a coherent core to the text (chapters 27–46), dealing with four zones of active Byzantine diplomacy (southern Italy, the Balkans, the Pontic steppes, and western Transcaucasia). (iv) Most of the historical material embedded in this diplomatic core peters out around 900, some fifty years before Constantine began work on it around 948. (v) Finally there is a striking anomaly in the very heart of the text. Its historico-diplomatic core fails to deal with several of Byzantium's most important neighbours, recent and current, namely the dominant Germanic powers (formerly Carolingian, now Ottonian) of transalpine Europe, the Balkan Bulgars, the Khazar khaganate (simply glimpsed off stage in the northern dossier, chapters 37–42), and the leading powers of the contemporary Near East (the Buyids of western Iran and Iraq, the Hamdanids of Jazira and northern Syria, the Ikhshidids of southern Syria and Egypt).

These various conundra can be solved with the aid of a single hypothesis—a variant of Romilly Jenkins' view that the text was composed in two stages.[51] (i) The emperor was personally responsible for the work in its final, unfinished form. No self-respecting clerk in the imperial secretariat would have dared submit such slip-shod copy. It follows that the miscellaneous notes scattered through the text are Constantine's, amounting to something like a small commonplace book of materials which caught his attention. (ii) Constantine took the decision to present the text to his son at a late stage in his work on it. His efforts to transform it into an educative tract were confined to the addition of the opening two sections (ch. 1–13). Hence the text as a whole continued to reflect the interests of the father rather than catering to those of the son. (iii) Constantine was responsible for the inclusion of the variegated materials which give the text its disorganised character. They may be classified broadly as anecdotal and antiquarian supplements to other works which he either sponsored or edited: the *De Thematibus* (hence the wealth of administrative material which has given the text its misleading conventional title); the *De Cerimoniis* (hence a brief history of the ships used for imperial progresses by sea); and the *Excerpta Historica* (hence the long extract from a local history of Bosporos in chapter 53). (iv) The crucial point is that Constantine was not responsible for the formation of

[51] Jenkins, *DAI Commentary*, pp. 1–8.

the historico-diplomatic core of the *DAI*, but merely introduced *scholia* and some more substantial additions into a pre-existing text. The date at which each of the four individual dossiers were originally compiled can be determined on the basis of a very few positive indicators (in the Balkan and Transcaucasian dossiers) and of that striking general feature already noted, namely the way that all four regional historical narratives peter out after 900. It is likely—although it cannot be proved—that the core of the *DAI* was commissioned at the very beginning of the tenth century by the Emperor Leo VI, as one of several handbooks in which knowledge, historical knowledge in this case as in that of his military handbook, was harnessed to the service of the state. (v) It was carefully planned at this first editorial stage (when the work was probably delegated to individual desks in the Dromos, the department charged with telecommunications and foreign affairs). It was designed to be a text dealing with actual and potential client-peoples in four arenas of active Byzantine diplomacy. Rival great powers, Germanic, Bulgar, Khazar and Arab, were deliberately omitted. They were the adversaries against whom the clients were to be used.

Of the four regions picked out for special attention in the original project of Leo VI, one and one only was treated systematically and in detail in the course of Constantine Porphyrogenitus' later editorial work. Other contemporary Byzantine interests—chiefly in Italy and the Mediterranean—can be glimpsed but only very intermittently in the miscellany of notes with which Constantine framed and amplified the slim, well-targeted manual commissioned by his father. His own predominant concern was with the north—not unreasonably since that was the quarter from which the most direct and menacing threats to the metropolitan heartland of the empire had come in the recent past. The Rus had launched a fierce attack on the capital and its Bithynian hinterland in 941. The Hungarians had devastated Thrace in 934 and 943. Only the sudden death of Symeon (in 927) had halted Bulgar expansion westward over much of the central and western Balkans, and peace, underpinned though it was with a marriage alliance, could not but look fragile in Byzantine eyes. It is not surprising then that the lessons in diplomacy which Constantine gave his son (ch. 1–13) dealt exclusively with the north.

Two distinct Byzantine views of the north are thus presented in the *DAI*. By comparing and contrasting the picture pieced together and given historical depth by those who drafted the northern dossier (ch. 37–42) for Leo VI with Constantine's more schematic account which focuses on the potential for conflict between northern peoples, it is possible to gain some idea of major changes in Byzantine perceptions and

in the realities behind them in the first half of the tenth century. But care has to be taken to clean away, as delicately and discriminatingly as possible, the editorial additions made by Constantine to the northern dossier compiled fifty years earlier. It is a matter of removing the final editorial patina without either leaving some of it attached to the original dossier or scraping away part of that dossier. This is, in my judgement, a feasible exercise. In general, the later, Constantinian additions can be identified without too much difficulty. They consist, in the main, of four types of material: chronological *scholia* to take account of the additional fifty years which had passed since the northern dossier was put together; geographical *scholia* intended to clarify but liable to confuse; passages bringing the dossier partially up to date; and substantial additions of more or less entertaining historical narrative, satisfying Constantine's taste for the anecdotal.

A detailed analysis of the northern dossier, taking note of Constantine's additions, is undertaken in the next section. For the moment, though, we should pause to consider the two views of the north presented by the *DAI* (with the Constantinian material extracted from the main body of Leo's northern dossier) and should take stock of what can be learned of the role of the Khazar khaganate (as well as of its relations to Byzantium) at the beginning and in the middle of the tenth century.

The original dossier was put together after one of the two major foreign policy initiatives of Leo VI ended in disaster in the 890s. The war which he engineered with the Balkan Bulgars went disastrously wrong after a striking initial success, a devastating thrust south of the Danube by his Hungarian allies, probably in 892. The Byzantine field army was intercepted south of the Haemus mountains and was decisively defeated at Bulgarophygon in the following year. The young Bulgar ruler Symeon thus gained a free hand in the north and was able to trump Byzantium's steppe diplomacy in 897 by bringing in the Pechenegs to drive the Hungarians from the Pontic steppes into the Carpathian basin.[52] The northern dossier contains information gathered once the dust had settled and a clear view could be obtained of the new political configuration of the northern world. It concentrates on the two nomad peoples involved in those recent events. The tribal components of both Pechenegs and Hungarians are enumerated. Their different types of leadership, tribal and supratribal, are described.[53]

[52] Howard-Johnston, 'Byzantium, Bulgaria and the Peoples of Ukraine'.
[53] *DAI*, ch. 37.15–45 (Pechenegs), 38.31–55 and 40.3–6 (Hungarians).

A general picture is given of the historical background to the recent convulsion on the steppes, one in which the Khazar khaganate can be seen as the hegemonic power, able to call on formidable steppe allies so as to impose its will when and where it chose.[54] There is, however, no chapter devoted to the khaganate itself, no description of its history, institutions and geographical articulation (a loss of reliable, document-based information to be lamented by all historians of the Khazars). It was excluded from detailed consideration, because it had engineered the Pecheneg attack on the Hungarians and was regarded as a hostile power. The omission of the Rus, who are only mentioned in passing in the northern dossier,[55] is probably to be attributed to their distance and to the difficulties of communicating with them along the direct Dniepr route. It is also rather intriguing, since the chief outcome of the policy review instituted by Leo after the debacle in the north (of which the gathering and sorting of intelligence material was a key part) appears to have been a decision to establish relations with the Rus, in the hope of using them as a counterweight against the Pechenegs, now firm allies of the Bulgars and occupying the Pontic steppes vacated by the Hungarians. Within a year or two of the compilation of the northern dossier, the Rus were being courted as potential clients, and were induced to sign treaties with Byzantium in 907 and 911.

Fifty years later, the Khazars were still firmly classed as enemies, against whom neighbouring peoples (Alans, Oghuz Turks and Volga Bulgars are named) were to be targeted.[56] This was only to be expected after several decades of uneasy relations, which had culminated in an aggressive act of war on the part of the khaganate, when Rus sea-raiders were redirected against Constantiople in 941 and did immense damage to its suburbs and the coastlands of Bithynia. They were also clearly ranked above the two other major contemporary adversaries of Byzantium in the north, the Hungarians and the Rus, who, like them, might make importunate demands of the Byzantines.[57] The *DAI* thus corroborates the evidence cited above from the *De Cerimoniis* (n. 32) for their great power status at this late stage in their history.

[54] *DAI*, ch. 37.2–14.
[55] *DAI*, ch. 37.42–9.
[56] *DAI*, ch. 10–12.
[57] *DAI*, ch. 13.24–8.

Unlike his father, Constantine was narrowly concerned with international relations in the north. Hence little information is to be expected on the domestic affairs of the khaganate. Some items can, however, be extracted. A name—the Nine Districts (*klimata*) is given for the heartland of the khaganate (from which came 'all the livelihood and plenty' of the Khazars),[58] probably to be identified with the huge salient of the west Eurasian steppes pushing south between the Caspian and Black Seas, shielded on the north by the Volga and Don and on the south by the Caucasus. The political strength of the khaganate may also be gauged from what is and is not said about its relations with its neighbours. For the opening section of the *DAI* deals with politically feasible conflicts between neighbouring peoples which might serve Byzantine interests in the north.

Three neighbouring peoples were identified as potential enemies of the Khazars. The Alans were singled out for special attention—they were easily accessible by sea, Christianity was making headway among them in the early tenth century, and they had already demonstrated their worth as clients, having gone to war (unsuccessfully) against the Khazars some time around 930. The Oghuz Turks were mentioned, quite naturally, *qua* principal eastern neighbours and most dangerous nomad rivals of the khaganate.[59] Finally, it may perhaps be inferred that the Volga Bulgars, already showing signs of restlessness at the time of Ibn Fadlan's visit in 922, subsequently loosened their ties with the khaganate, so that they could be regarded by Byzantium as a useful potential counterweight. In contrast to this apparent attenuation of their authority in the middle Volga region, there are indications that the Khazars were continuing to exercise extensive influence over the Rus and the Pechenegs. For no word is said about deploying either of them against the Khazars. Arguments from silence are weak, but less so than usual in the case of the Pechenegs (the Khazars are absent from what looks like a considered summary of potential Pecheneg targets),[60] while a degree of Rus subordination is positively attested in the *Genizah Letter*.

---

[58] *DAI*, ch. 10.5–8.

[59] Golden, *Introduction*, pp. 205–13.

[60] *DAI*, ch. 2–5 (Rus, Hungarians, Bulgars), 9.114 (Oghuz) and 13.9–11 (Hungarians). The only activity running against Khazar interests undertaken by the Pechenegs was covert gathering of intelligence (ch. 6). Evidence can thus be culled from the *DAI* which contradicts the statement in the Arab geographical tradition (Ibn Rusteh, tr. Wiet, p. 157 and Gardîzî, tr. Martinez, p. 154) that the Khazars waged annual wars against the Pechenegs. A specific crisis of unknown date seems to have been transmuted into endemic warfare.

The *DAI* thus makes it plain that Byzantine-Khazar relations were bad around 900, and that there had been no improvement by 950. The reason is probably to be sought in the geopolitics of the steppe world in the 890s, rather than in a growing religious antagonism. The conversion to Judaism of the ruling elite (or much of it) did not affect the traditional Khazar toleration of diverse faiths at home (Arab sources should be believed on this point, since it affected Muslims in the khaganate), and it is unlikely to have suffused foreign policy with bigotry.[61] The great power status of the khaganate is also clearly recognised by the *DAI* in both editorial phases. There may have been a perceptible weakening of the khaganate's hold over two client-peoples, the Alans and the Volga-Bulgars, by 950, but it was still a formidable force in the north. The fatal blow struck by the Rus and Oghuz Turks within twenty years was probably effective because it was entirely unexpected.

As for the internal organisation of the khaganate, the *DAI* adds virtually nothing to the scraps of information picked up from other Byzantine sources—merely the name for the core territory of the khaganate. It cannot therefore be used as a much-needed control on Arab geographical texts which may mix up and rework information of different dates and origins. But we should not abandon hope. Two important subordinate peoples are the central subjects of the northern dossier compiled on Leo VI's orders, which forms one of the four components of the historico-diplomatic core of the *DAI*. Variegated material, most of it of high quality, is preserved about their institutions, their past movements and their past relations with the Khazars. The *DAI* may therefore open a window into the interior life of the khaganate as an imperial confederacy, may enable us to see something of the dynamic processes of Khazar government insofar as it affected client-peoples. It is worth taking a closer look at the contents of the northern dossier.

III

A great deal of information is packed into the northern dossier of the *DAI*. Something is said about geography (a detailed survey being given of the northern coast of the Black Sea) and about manmade structures

[61] *Contra* Shepard, 'The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism'.

which testified to past Roman outreach beyond the Danube.[62] The main concern, though, is with the history and institutions of the Pechenegs and the Hungarians.

Leo VI realised that diplomacy required historical understanding of the peoples with whom Byzantium dealt. He therefore made sure that summaries of what was known or could be learned about the pasts of foreign peoples were included in the four main component parts of his *DAI*. In the case of the northern dossier, information was gathered about the situation before the crisis of the 890s, reaching back to an earlier upheaval which had transformed the political configuration of the steppe world on the edge of the core territory of the Khazar khaganate. This earlier upheaval bears a general resemblance to that which shook Leo VI's regime and eventually discharged the Hungarians into the Carpathian basin: the Khazars were the prime movers; the Hungarians came under attack from the Pechenegs; and the outcome of the war was a migration west by both peoples, the Pechenegs occupying land vacated by the Hungarians.The Hungarians were the main protagonists in this first episode. The role of the Pechenegs, after their defeat by the Khazars (unaided on this occasion), was to act as Khazar agents. The following items of information are supplied: the Hungarians had 'served as allies in all the Khazars' wars'; after their defeat by the Pechenegs, they split in two, one group (probably the smaller) migrating east 'towards Persia', the other moving west; this latter group was subsequently reinforced by a body of Khazars who had staged a rebellion in the khaganate and had been defeated; finally, the Khazars decided to upgrade the status of the Hungarian leadership and invested a client-ruler from a new dynasty.[63] This tranche of early history with its strong Hungarian focus is almost certainly derived from Hungarian sources. It appears to represent Hungarian dynastic history at an early stage in its formation. It must be handled with care, since it may have been adapted to suit contemporary interests at the beginning of the tenth century, but it may be assumed that its outline of events corresponds to historical reality.

This first chunk of historical material is followed by an account, written mainly from a Byzantine perspective, of events in the steppe world in the 890s (discussed in section II above).[64] Besides this historical mate-

[62] *DAI*, ch. 37.58–67, 40.27–32, 42.15–22 & 55–110.
[63] *DAI*, ch. 38.3–55.
[64] *DAI*, ch. 38.55–61, 40.7–27.

rial, the dossier provides up-to-date information about both peoples. Their main divisional or tribal components (eight in both cases) are enumerated and named. An account, with rather more precision in the case of the Pechenegs, is given of both peoples' geographical dispositions. Contemporary leaders are named for each of the Pecheneg divisions or tribes, and the constitutional arrangements governing elegibility for election as such a leader are summarised. Distinctions of status between divisions or tribes are noted: the name Kangar was confined to the three leading divisions of the Pechenegs, who were distinguished for their courage and nobility; the first and militarily most prestigious of the Hungarian tribes was that composed of Khazars, known as the Kavars.[65] This material, it should be noted, is remarkably precise and well set out. It looks like a digest of Byzantine observations and intelligence about both peoples. It provides evidence of the highest quality about two peoples in the Khazar sphere of influence. This evidence is undoubtedly superior to most of that circulating among contemporary and near-contemporary Arab geographical writers.

All of these passages, dealing with history, institutions and geography, probably belonged to Leo's original dossier. Constantine's three main additions are easily distinguishable: a set of notes on Hungarian titles and personages, coming down to his own time;[66] an anecdote about Svyatopluk, last ruler of Moravia, which is only loosely connected with the rest of the dossier;[67] and a version of the Sarkel story, drawn from the same source as that used by Theophanes Continuatus.[68] It is tempting also to credit Constantine with various geographical glosses, including seven short passages in which the territories held by the Hungarians before and after their two migations are named and defined in terms of their rivers.[69] These look like *scholia* intended to clarify points of geography, but they serve only to create confusion, as if the editor had not fully understood the material he was commenting upon.

No other text, Byzantine or non-Byzantine, can match the northern dossier of the *DAI* as a source for the history of the Hungarians and the

[65] *DAI*, ch. 37.2–57 & 68–71, 39.2–14, 40.3–7 & 35–50.
[66] *DAI*, ch. 40.51–68.
[67] *DAI*, ch. 41.
[68] *DAI*, ch. 42.22–55. Cf. I. Ševčenko, 'Re-reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus', in Shepard and Franklin, *Byzantine Diplomacy*, pp. 167–95 (at 190).
[69] *DAI*, ch. 38.4–9, 38.30–1, 38.57–60, 38.66–71, 40.21–7, 40.37–8, 42.18–20. Two passages mentioning the Rus (ch. 42.60–1 & 75–8) are also probably attributable to Constantine—cf. Howard-Johnston, '*De Administrando Imperio*', section IV.

Pechenegs in the ninth century. None can give the same insight into the internal functioning of the khaganate as an imperial polity. A distant observer in the Germanic world such as Regino of Prüm is unable to document steppe history with precision and accuracy.[70] Later versions of Hungarian dynastic history in Latin contain far too much fanciful and tendentious material to be useful,[71] while no contemporary Arab source, with the single exception of Ibn Fadlān, can offer comparably detailed, datable and authoritative information.[72] It is upon the evidence of *DAI*, carefully analysed and critically evaluated, that any modern reconstruction of early Hungarian history must be founded.

The Hungarians' connection with the Khazars antedated their first defeat and relocation. The implication of the phrasing used by the text is that their service as allies was of long standing. The figure of three years which is given must surely be corrupt. Three hundred years should probably envisaged as the original reading, a figure which should not be taken literally but as indicating that the Hungarians had been Khazar clients since the formation of the khaganate. A long period of sustained and close contact of this sort provides the context within which Finno-Ugrian-speakers could have made extensive lexical borrowings from Turkish-speaking Khazars or Volga Bulgars.[73] The Hungarians' territory at this time, which was subsequently taken over by the Pechenegs, is clearly defined at the start of the Pecheneg chapter of the *DAI* as land between the Volga and Ural rivers, to the south-west of the Ural mountains. This corresponds in general to the location, Bashkiria, suggested by modern Hungarian scholars, on the basis mainly of linguistic and archaeological evidence.[74] The Hungarians can therefore be seen to have acted as the eastern shield of the core territory of the Khazar khaganate up to the time of the first great convulsion of the steppe reported in the *DAI*.

The date of that event can be roughly fixed, once it is established where the western component of the Hungarians moved after their initial defeat. Again there is a clear definition to be found in the Pecheneg chapter: the Pontic steppes, on both banks of the Dniepr, were held by

---

[70] *Reginonis Abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon*, ed. F. Kurze, MGH, Scriptores in usum scholarum (Hanover, 1890), pp. 131–3. Cf. Gy. Kristó, *Hungarian History in the Ninth Century* (Szeged, 1996), pp. 142, 187 and Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe*, pp. 420–1.

[71] Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe*, pp. 58–9, 414–5.

[72] See pp. 172–3 above.

[73] *DAI*, ch. 38.3–4 & 13–4. Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe*, pp. 104–114.

[74] *DAI*, ch. 37.2–4, 38.19–23. Kristó, *Hungarian History*, pp. 31–55.

the Hungarians until their second forced migration over the Carpathians, when the Pechenegs once again took their place.[75] The Hungarians' presence there as early as the 830s may be inferred from a notice in the Logothete's Chronicle which reports that a Byzantine operation to rescue prisoners-of-war resettled by the Balkan Bulgars beyond the Danube was impeded by Hungarian attack at that time.[76] It may perhaps then be hazarded that there was a connection between the relocation of the Hungarians and Khazar perception of a new threat from the north, from the Rus.[77] On this hypothesis, the function of the Hungarians, backed by the Don basin fortresses, would have been to project Khazar power far to the west and north-west of their core territory, and to counter a future extension of Rus power into the Dniepr basin.[78]

It was after their arrival in the Pontic steppes that the Khazar Kavars joined the Hungarians and established a degree of authority over them. The tribe formed by their three clans became the senior tribe, ranking first because of its fighting prowess, and gave a pronounced Turkish cast to what was a predominantly Finno-Ugrian tribal confederation. The hybrid grouping was given a new name, that of *Turks*.[79] There is nothing untoward in this account picked up by the *DAI* from Hungarian sources at the beginning of the tenth century, save for one element, the story that the Kavars were rebels against rather than agents of the khaganate. It is a most implausible story, given the unequivocal evidence that the Khazars

[75] *DAI*, ch. 37.5–14 (a passage retouched by Constantine with short chronological glosses at lines 5, 7–8 and 13–4) and 34–45. Cf. Kristó, *Hungarian History*, pp. 107–112, 154–8.

[76] Theodosius Melitenus, pp. 161–3, with the comments of Kristó, *Hungarian History*, pp. 15–6, 85–9 and Shepard, 'The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism', pp. 24–5.

[77] Cf. Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo*, pp. 208–9.

[78] A reference to a ditch which, in the past, protected the Khazars from attacks by the Hungarians and other peoples, at Ibn Rusteh, tr. Wiet, p. 160, may be a garbled reminiscence of the Don frontier fortifications (*contra* Zuckerman, 'Les Hongrois', pp. 59–60). At this point I part company from Kristó, *Hungarian History*, pp. 131–45, who (1) dissociates the Hungarians' move west around 830 from their first defeat by the Pechenegs, (2) trusts the *DAI* reading of three years for the Khazar-Hungarian alliance, (3) dates its start around 840, (4) has the Khazars relocate the Hungarians at that time east of the Don, to act as their eastern frontier guards, and (5) introduces a third migration around 850 (some Hungarians going east, others west back to the Pontic steppes), which is that brought about by Pecheneg military action. This is an unnecessarily complicated scenario, for which no positive evidence is to be found in the sources.

[79] *DAI*, ch. 39 & 40.1–7. The only satisfactory explanation for the consistent use of the name Turks in the *DAI* is that it was the accepted designation of the Hungarians at the time of the northern dossier's compilation. The name cannot have originated as a self-designation (given its inappropriateness) but was surely imposed by a superior Turkish authority, the Khazar khaganate—*contra* Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe*, pp. 275–8.

were in control of events both before and after the conjoining of the two groups and that they would have had every reason to oppose any build-up of power close to their territory by a group of defeated and doubtless vengeful rebels. The khaganate's control afterwards is made manifest in the investiture episode, which is dated 'not long after' the Hungarians' migration west.[80] Hungarian dynastic tradition was coy about the tribe to which the new dynasty belonged, but it can readily be identified as *the highest-ranking, Khazar tribe*.[81] Once the Hungarians had broken free of Khazar control (towards the end of the ninth century), this ruling house, of which the most noted early representative was Arpad, did not advertise its Khazar origins and probably sought to distance itself from the khaganate by devising the story of the rebellion, which gave the misleading impression that the new amalgam was formed quite independently in the steppes to the west of the khaganate. Reality, though, still dimly visible, was very different: determined to ensure the future pliability of their Hungarian clients after their relocation around 830 in the Pontic steppes, the khaganate grafted on a Khazar tribe and gave it delegated authority.

Close, critical scrutiny of the historical material transmitted by the *DAI* thus suggests that the Khazars restructured the Hungarians at the time of their enforced move. A similar conclusion may also be drawn from the detailed information pieced together by Byzantine observers about Pecheneg organisation and institutions.[82] There is every sign that the Pechenegs too had been subjected to a programme of thorough-going reform. Although nothing is reported of the circumstances (indeed the institutional changes have to be teased out of the material presented in the text), it seems improbable that they were of very recent origin (dating from the 890s). Had this been so, some hint might be expected in a text composed so soon afterwards. In any case, events moved so fast during this second convulsion of the steppes, that the Khazars were probably hard put to maintain some control over the Pechenegs and were almost certainly in no position to push through a series of radical internal reforms. It seems safer therefore to associate the reforms with the early ninth century defeat of the Pechenegs and their

[80] *DAI*, ch. 38.31–55.

[81] *DAI*, ch. 39.10–4, 40.3–4. L. Varady, 'Revision des Ungarn-Image von Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos', *BZ* 82 (1989), pp. 22–58 (at 27–35).

[82] General on the Pechenegs: Golden, *Introduction*, pp. 264–70; Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe*, pp. 234–9.

first incorporation into the Khazar empire. Confirmation is to hand. For the Pechenegs, like the Hungarians, were renamed after their defeat and displacement: they were stripped of their old name, Kangar (which now became an honorific, attached to the three leading tribes), and were now designated Pecheneg for the first time.[83] The imposition of a new name is best taken as marking the completion of a process of restructuring designed to make them reliable clients for the forseeable future.

The following reconstruction of the Khazar reform programme may be proposed on the evidence of subsequent Pecheneg organisation as revealed in the *DAI*. First there was a general reshaping of the old tribes. These were replaced by a set of eight new tribes, which were also termed military divisions. Each of these divisions was subdivided into five subordinate units. The neatness of these arrangements and the military connotations of the word *thema* used of the new tribes point strongly to intervention from outside and from above.[84] This can be confirmed from the names assigned to the new divisions. These are all evidently artificial, consisting in most cases of two elements, a title and a horse-colour.[85] Second, an unusual system of cross-cousin succession was instituted for the transmission of the command over each division. This created an artificial dynasty within each division, which could be relied upon precisely because it was artificial and dependent on Khazar backing. The requirement that power circulate widely within it ensured that it was of a considerable size and therefore self-sustaining, while the apparent absence of a predetermined circulatory pattern seems designed to maximise competition between claimants and thus to require intervention by a superior (Khazar) authority at each succession (to ensure an orderly election and a fair and generally acceptable outcome).[86]

There is one striking omission in the *DAI*'s account of Pecheneg organisation. At no point is any reference made to a single, supratribal leader. Yet, as has been seen, some such superior authority was required

[83] *DAI*, ch. 37.68–71, 38.19–26.

[84] *DAI*, ch. 37.15–24 & 32–45. J.D. Howard-Johnston, 'Thema', in A. Moffatt, ed., *MAISTOR. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, Byzantina Australiensia 5 (Canberra, 1984), pp. 189–97.

[85] J. Németh, 'Die petschenegischen Stammesnamen', *Ungarische Jahrbücher* 10 (1930), pp. 27–34; K.H. Menges, 'Etymological Notes on some Päčänäg Names', *Byzantion* 17 (1944–5), pp. 256–80 (at 260–9); Golden, *Introduction*, p. 266.

[86] *DAI*, ch. 37.24–32. J. Goody, ed., *Succession to High Offiice*, Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology 4 (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 1–56 & 142–76 for discussions of succession in general and circulating succession in particular.

to supervise elections of divisional leaders, as indeed also to co-ordinate actions involving more than one division and to regulate conflicts which might arise between them. Higher authority evidently existed from the time of the original reforms but has to be sought outside the set of Pecheneg divisions. Once the question is put in these terms, there is no difficulty about identifying and locating the superior authority programmed in by the reforms.[87] It was surely the central Khazar apparatus of government which regulated Pecheneg affairs. A policy of direct rule was adopted in their case, to assure the Khazars effective direction of military operations and thus to guarantee the reliability of the vital eastern military shield of their heartlands.

The Hungarians were subjected to more drastic measures. They were divided in two and sent to opposite ends of the Khazar sphere of influence. The western group, probably the larger, then had three Khazar clans grafted on to form a new leading tribe. There was a sharp cultural as well as political distinction between this leading Khazar element and the rump of the Hungarians, whose previous name is given as Savartoi Asphaloi.[88] The former belonged to the governing elite among the nomadic peoples of the khaganate and spoke Turkish. The latter were one of several nomadic client-peoples and had a different, Finno-Ugrian ancestry.[89]

There are several indications that traditional tribal divisions among the Hungarians may have been remodelled on the same general lines as those of the Pechenegs. For the new Khazar-led people comprised the same number of tribes (eight) as did the Pechenegs after re-organisation. The Kavars, the new leading tribe, was, as has been seen, an artificial construct of three apparently independent Khazar clans. Considerable re-organisation of the seven Finno-Ugrian tribes is also suggested by the apparently Turkish names assigned to five of them (renaming once again being taken as an indicator of re-organisation). The retention of Finno-Ugrian names by two tribes, listed in second and third places after the Kavars, suggests that they may have been assigned a status superior to that of the majority of the Hungarians (akin to that of the three Kangar

[87] The question was first put and answered for me by Hugh Andrew, formerly an undergraduate at Magdalen College, now a successful publisher in Scotland.

[88] *DAI*, ch. 38.1–31.

[89] Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe*, pp. 92–116.

divisions among the Pechenegs), and thus may have been co-opted as the principal aides of the Khazar leadership of the new grouping.[90]

A very different system of political management was adopted in the case of the Hungarians. Instead of a policy of direct rule, Khazar control was exercised through the leading Khazar element in the new grouping. Apart from the strong bonds established by a shared past and a common culture, the Kavars could be expected to remain highly responsive to Khazar authority, since they needed it to maintain and consolidate their position among the Hungarians. But it was essential to implant a stable leadership in the Kavars themselves, both to ensure their cohesion and to guarantee efficient communications to and from the central Khazar authorities. The model chosen was a conventional monarchical one, with lineal succession in a single family. There may well be some embroidery of the facts in the *DAI* version, but there is nothing implausible in the account given of the consultation process preceding the choice of a ruling family and the investiture of a first ruler. The new ruler was of course chosen from within the Khazar leading tribe, a fact masked but not concealed by Hungarian dynastic history.[91]

The new name acquired by the Hungarians takes on a new significance in the light of the foregoing analysis. Renaming was an act of some importance: it was an assertion of authority by the Khazars, part of the process of *subordinating* a people; it was an intervention from above, intended to contribute to a change of self-identity, hence a key component in a process of restructuring. The choice of *Turks* as the new collective name for the Khazar-led Hungarians suggests that the ultimate aim of the Khazars was not simply to remodel them but to expunge their Finno-Ugrian identity. Their intention was to subject the new grouping to aggressive cultural bombardment from within and without and thereby, after several generations, to absorb them into the Turkish majority among the nomads of their empire.[92]

Such appear to have been the two reform programmes instituted by the Khazars to strengthen their geopolitical position in the first half of the ninth century, when they first sensed the rising power of the Rus in

[90] *DAI*, ch. 39.1–40.7. Kristó, *Hungarian History*, pp. 89–90, 126.

[91] *DAI*, ch. 38.31–55, 40.53–65. The only detectable error in the first passage is the identification of Árpád rather than his father Álmos as first ruler of the Hungarians (cf. Kristó, *Hungarian History*, pp. 165–7).

[92] Cf. *DAI*, ch. 39.7–10.

the north. The chief common feature was a radical remodelling of the tribal structure of both client peoples. By their actions the Khazars demonstrated that they could conceive of social re-engineering on a grand scale and that they had the administrative capacity to carry it through. There could be no clearer evidence of the high degree of ideological development reached by steppe nomad peoples in the early middle ages, nor of the efficacy of the apparatus of government at their disposal.

No less impressive is the flexibility of approach demonstrated in the different policies adopted towards the two peoples. The khaganate had several management strategies to hand. Two, direct rule and investiture of a client-ruler belonging to a detachment of the ruling Khazar stratum of the empire, are revealed by the *DAI*. But resort was probably had to other strategies in other circumstances. Thus a rather looser form of management is suggested for the Volga Bulgars, by the report (admittedly reflecting a Volga Bulgar point of view) of Ibn Fadlān.[93] Other systems, including the appointment of Khazar governors and recognition of local tribal chiefs, may be envisaged for the wide range of sedentary subject peoples. Arrangements are likely to have varied according to the size of a subject people, their level of institutional development and the geographical disposition of their territories.

The chief contribution of Byzantine sources is thus made by a single text, the *DAI*. It provides a clear view of a strikingly invasive form of client-management practised by the khaganate. Displacement of large population groups can be corroborated from archaeological evidence (the clearest case is that of Alans uprooted from the North Caucasus and relocated in a belt of wooded steppe in the upper Donets and middle Don basins).[94] Reconfiguration of peoples may be just detectable (chiefly in diversity of burial practices at individual sites). But archaeology cannot rival the clarity of vision offered by the *DAI*, nor can earlier Roman and Byzantine sources dealing with other nomad peoples in the westernmost reaches of the Eurasian steppes, nor other written sources dealing with the Khazar khaganate. The *DAI* provides high-grade, fascinating evidence of a nomad imperial polity at the peak of its powers and master of its own and many other peoples' destinies.

---

[93] Ibn Fadlān, tr. Canard, pp. 51–2: the Bulgar *yil-tawar* was merely required to send a son as hostage and a daughter as bride to the khagan and to pay tribute. Cf. Golden, *Introduction*, pp. 255–6.

[94] Pletneva, *Ocherki khazarskoj arkheologii*, pp. 24–64.

Abbreviations

CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
CFHB	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
TM	*Travaux et Mémoires*
MAIET	*Materialy po Arkheologii, Istorii i Etnografii Tavrii*
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
REB	*Revue des Études Byzantines*
AEMA	*Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*

AL-KHAZAR AND *AṢ-ṢAQÂLIBA*: CONTACTS. CONFLICTS?

T.M. Kalinina

The terms *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and *al-Khazar* are often encountered in the Arab-Persian medieval sources. The first term—*aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* (singular—*ṣaqlâb*, sometimes—*ṣiqlâb*) is the Arabic form of the Greek term σκλάβοι, σκλαβήνοι (and late Latin *Sclavi*). In modern scholarship there is a tendency to identify this word with Latin *sclavus*—"slave". It is connected with the extensive expansion of the slave trade in Medieval Europe. Starting from the sixth century, the Slavs, scattered and migrating over vast territories from the Balkans to the Volga river and from the Adriatic to the Baltic seas, took part in the turbulent political life of Europe and became one of the major components of this commerce in humans. Combinations of the denominations *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, al-Khazar, Burṭâṣ, at-Turk* etc., which are often encountered in medieval Arabic works, especially geographic treatises, allow us to think that in those works the term *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* had an ethnic meaning. The term *al-Khazar* was used in the works of medieval Arab-Persian writers with regard to a people, to an *Iqlîm* "a clime" (in this case a geographical zone is meant), and to a state (BGA I, 10, 220, 223; BGA II–2, 15, 394, 396). The combination of those two terms in the medieval Arabic writings is the subject of this paper.

One of the widely spread themes in Arabic literature is the origin of peoples. Those Arabic authors who described the Biblical genealogy of peoples placed *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, al-Khazar* and a number of other peoples in the Northern and Eastern regions of the world among the ranks of the descendants of Japheth, the son of Noah.

Aṭ-Ṭabarî (832–923), author of a world history, referring to Ibn Isḥâq (eighth century), included among Japhet's descendants *at-Turk, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*, the peoples *Yâjûj wa-Mâjûj* [Gog and Magog] (*aṭ-Ṭabarî* I, 211); in another fragment among Japheth's children he mentioned *al-Khazar, at-Turk, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* et al. (*aṭ-Ṭabarî* I, 216–218). Sa'îd ibn al-Baṭrîq (died 939) listed a multitude of the descendants of Japheth: *at-Turk, Bajânak* (Pecheneg), *at-Taġazġaz* (Toquz-Oghuz), *at-Tibbat* (the inhabitants of Tibet), *Yâjûj wa-Mâjûj*, *al-Khazar*, the peoples of the Caucasus, *ar-Rum* (Byzantium), *ar-Rûs, al-Bulġar, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* et al. (*Seippel*,

53). In the anonymous work *Muḫtaṣar al-ʿAjâʾib* (tenth century), which a number of scholars have identified as *Aḫbâr az-Zamân*, which is, in turn, ascribed to al-Masʿûdî, there is a notice in the description of the *Burjân* people as one of Japheth's descendants (presumably referring to the Bulgars on the Danube River), that they were fighting "with *ar-Rum, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, at-Turk*" (*Kriukov*, 205). Gardîzî (XI century), citing Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (eighth century), claims that Japheth received the lands: *at-Turk, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, Yâjûj wa-Mâjûj*—up to China; among the Turks Gardîzî mentioned the peoples of the Khazar, the Oghuz, the Qarluqs et al. (*Gardîzî*, 41–42). Referring to Saʿîd ibn Musayyab (died 713/714) al-Bakrî (XI century) also named *Yâjûj wa-Mâjûj, at-Turk, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* (*Kunik-Rosen* I, 18) as Japheth's descendants (*Kunik–Rosen* I, 18) without mentioning here the Khazars, although it is possible that this name is not given by the author here only because the specific information on the Khazars in al-Bakrî dates back to another primary source, rather than a genealogical fragment, namely the work of al-Iṣṭakhrî (*al-Bakri* I, 445–448). In the twelfth century, an anonymous historian, the author of the work *Mujmal at-Tawârîkh*, considered the Turks, the Khazars, the Rûs, the Burṭâṣ, the Slavs and other peoples of Northern and Eastern Europe as Japheth's descendants, personifying some of them, such as Turk, Chin, Khazar, Rus, and Ṣaqlâb as eponymous forefathers of the tribes (*Novoseltzev* 1990, 78).

In the abovementioned examples, the peoples *al-Khazar* and *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* are placed within the East-European and Asiatic circle of the peoples—the descendants Japheth.

Al-Yaʿqûbî (ninth century) in his "History" several times referred to biblical genealogies of peoples. In one fragment of his work he wrote that *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* belonged to one of Japheth's descendants—Jumar, but that *at-Turk* and *al-Khazar* belonged to another of Japheth's descendant—Mash (*al-Jaʿqubi* I, 13). A similar theme is found at al-Masʿûdî (tenth century) (*Maçoudi* I, 78–79). In another extract al-Yaʿqûbî says that "the states and peoples of *as-Sin, al-Hind, as-Sind, at-Turk, al-Khazar, at-Tubbat, al-Bulġâr, ad-Dailam* and that which adjoins the land of Khorasan fell to the lot of Noah, son of Japheth," but doesn't mention here *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* (*al-Jaʿqubi* I, 17). In yet another description of the peoples, al-Yaʿqûbî singled out *al-Khazar*, but now as the "children" of the third scion of Japheth—Thogarma, among the peoples and states close to the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, but here, too, *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* are not mentioned (*al-Jaʿqubi* I, 203).

In the abovementioned examples although the peoples *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and *al-Khazar* are mentioned among the descendants of Japheth, they are, nonetheless, markedly separated from one another.

This tendency to bring together the descendants of Japheth as peoples of both the Western and East-European circle of the peoples can be found in the writtings of Ibn Qutaiba (ninth century), who ennumerates *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, Burjân, al-Ispân* (the Spaniards), *at-Turks, al-Khazar, Yâjûj wa-Mâjûj* (*Ibn Coteiba*, 14). Al-Masʿûdî names those living "under Capricorn" (that is, in the North), as the "children" of Japheth—*Ifranja* (the Franks), *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, Nukubarda* (the Langobards), *al-Ishbân* (the Spaniards), *Yâjûj wa-Mâjûj*, *at-Turks, al-Khazar, Burjân, al-Lân* (the Alans) etc. (*Maçoudi* III, 66). In the work *Muḥtaṣar al-ʿAjâ'ib*, *al-Ishban, ar-Rûs, al-Burjân, al-Khazar, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, Furs* (the Persians) etc. are named among Japheth's descendants (*Kriukov,* 196). Al-Bakrî mentioned already above, in one of the fragments of his book called the descendants of Japheth *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba Burjân*, the "infidel" *al-Ishbân* (i.e. the Christian Spaniards) as well as *at-Turk, al-Khazar*, *Yâjûj wa-Mâjûj* (*al-Bakri* I, 87–88). Yâqût wrote (in the thirteenth century), referring to Hishâm ibn al-Kalbî (died 819), that *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* are the "brothers" of the Armenians, the Greeks, the Franks and at the same time all of them are the descendants of Japheth (*Jacut* III, 405).

As one can see from the abovementioned examples, the peoples of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and *al-Khazar* in the Biblical genealogy were placed by the majority of the sources already noted alongside the East European peoples as the descendants of Japheth, but they were not termed "neighbours" or closely related peoples. In the lists of the peoples, however, the Turks and the Khazars were deemed rather close. Evidence for this came from traditions which were far from the Biblical genealogies and which were reflected in the books of early Arab scholars—mathematicians and astronomers.

Thus, Muḥammad ibn Mûsâ al-Khwârizmî (the first half of ninth century) in his "The Book of the Image of the Earth" based on the "Geography" of Cl. Ptolemy (second century) mentioned in the list of the towns of the sixth "clime" (latitude zone) the point named "*al-Khazar*". According to this information the town was situated on the bank of the river "Long", corresponding to Ptolemy's Jaxartes and the present-day Syr Darya. According to the geographical co-ordinates in book of al-Khwârizmî the town *Navâkat* was situated to the East of the point *al-Khazar.* The nearest towns of the fifth "clime" (zone) were Tarbend,

Isfîjâb, Banâkath, Khujand (Khodjent). So, the town *al-Khazar* was found in the limits of Central Asia, somewhere in the middle of the Syr Darya stream. At the same time, all these towns were situated, according to al-Khwârizmî's materials, within the part of the world marked as populated by the Turks and corresponding to the Inner Skythia in the book of Ptolemy (*Al-Huwarizmi*, 28, 32, 105, 147; *Daunicht* I, 110; *Kalinina* 1988, 39, 40, 48, 74–77).

The astronomer al-Farghânî (ninth century) ennumerating the Earth's "climes" noted in the sixth "climate" the land of Khazars which was situated, according to his conceptions, between the land *Yâjûj* in the extreme East of the Oikumene and the Jurjân Sea, that is the Caspian Sea (Alfraganus, 38; Kalinina 1988, 130, 132, 135). Ibn Khurradâdhbeh (IX century) also placed the Khazars in Skythia (BGA VI, 154). And Abu-l-Faraj ibn al-'Ibrî (Bar Hebraeus, thirteenth century) retelling the information of Michael the Syrian (twelfth century) relating to the sixth century told a legend about the exit from Inner Skythia of three brothers, one of whom was the ancestor of the Khazar people (*Marquart*, 484, 485; *Altheim* I, 91).

Thus, there was a certain tendency to bring together the Turks and the Khazars in the Arab-Persian sources which did not preclude placing the one and the other among the descendants of Japheth, where among others, *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* also happened to be.

Considering the genealogy of peoples given by a variety of scholars it is possible on the whole to establish that the greater part of authors were of the opinion that *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and *al-Khazar* belonged rather to the common East-European circle of peoples; others placed *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* rather in the European area, while *al-Khazar*—were assigned to the Asiatic area; although in any case these peoples were considered to be descendants of Japheth. In these overviews of the peoples, *al-Khazar* and *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*, in the Arabo-Persian literary monuments are rarely placed alongside one another; rather, they are located in the vicinity of the Turks, the Rûs, the Bulghars; however, they are in the same region together with these East-European peoples.

Ibn Khurradâdhbeh (IX century) and Ibn al-Faqîh (early tenth century), who used many of his data, recall an ancient tradition of dividing the Earth into parts, among was *Ûrûfî* (Europe). It included *Andalus, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, Rûm, Firanja, Tanja* (Tanger) and the territories up to the borders of *Miṣr* (Egypt). Another part was called *Isqûtiyâ* (Skythia) to which, beside Armenia, Khorasan, and the lands of *at-Turk, al-Khazar* belonged (BGA VI, 155; BGA V, 7). In this case, the peoples were

separated. In his *Kitâb at-Tanbîh wa-l-Ishrâf*, al-Masʿûdî reporting the contents of one of his previous books (which has not been preserved for us) named the peoples which he wrote about earlier in the following order: *al-Hind, aṣ-Ṣîn, at-Turk, al-Khazar, al-Lân*, the peoples of the Caucasus Mountains, among whom he also mentioned *al-Khazar* as well as *al-Abâr* (the Avars), *Burjân, ar-Rûs, al-Bulġar, Ifrandja, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* etc. (BGA VIII, 184). In another fragment, al-Masʿudi, mentioning a book of a Byzantine prisoner, Muslim Abu Muslim al-Jarmî, which has not been preserved, reported that it contained information about the peoples neighbouring with Byzantium—the Burjâns, the Avars, the Bulġars, the Slavs, the Khazars and others (BGA VIII, 191). Abu-l-Qasim Saʿid al-Andalusî (eleventh century) gave a whole list of the peoples "who had nothing to do with science"; among them there were *aṣ-Ṣîn, Yâjûj wa-Mâjûj, at-Turk, Burṭâṣ, as-Sarîr, al-Khazar, al-Lân, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, al-Bulġar, Burjân* and some other peoples, patently relating to the East-European area, athough further on the peoples of Africa are listed (Arabskije istochniki X–XIII vv., 193–194).

Referring to the actual geographical information, the majority of the Arab scholars noted that *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and *al-Khazar* were territorially close. For example, in the same books of Ibn Khurrâdadhbeh and Ibn al-Faqîh there is information on the river running from *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*, in the mouth of which the Khazar city Khamlîj was located, which was at the Caspian Sea. That river according to these two authors was a trade route connecting the distant lands of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and the Khazar city on the Caspian Sea (BGA VI, 124, 154–155; BGA V, 297–298). The viewpoints of the scholars offering an exact identification of the river Itil (the Volga river) with the Tanais (Don) can hardly be correct; rather, the Arab authors meant rather a large river route from the Slavs along the East European rivers including the Don river, and portages, the Volga, to Khazaria and into the Caspian Sea.

Ibn Khurradâdhbeh wrote also that one of the "inhabited" quarters of the Earth, the northern one, included Armenia, Azerbaijan, the area of the South-western and Southern coast of the Caspian Sea as well as *al-Khazar, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba,* and *al-Abâr* (BGA VI, 117–118). Ibn al-Faqîh noted, following Ibn Khurradâdhbeh, the mountain chain which he named *al-Qabq* (the Caucasus), which ran through the boundaries of *al-Khazar, al-Lân* and up to the area of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* (the latter information is not available in the existing version of the Ibn Khurradâdhbeh's book, BGA V, 295; BGA VI, 172–173). On the whole, these materials are devoted to idea that was then current in the Arabic literary tradition,

according to which there was a single mountain chain embracing the world and running from the West to the East (*Krachkovskii*, 22), but the materials preserved in Ibn al-Faqîh show that the Arab scholars following this old tradition filled it with the realities known to them—so a mountain chain appears with the name of the Caucasus, running through the lands of the Khazars, the Alans and the Slavs. On the basis of this data it is hardly possible to claim that our author knew about a certain number of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* in the Caucasus (*Togan*, 325–326). There is an opinion that this single mountain chain seemed to the Arab authors to run up to the Carpathian mountains where there was a Slavic population (*Lewicki*, 287–288; *Novoseltsev* 1965, 383–384, note 164). On the whole, it is important to note the fact that the Oriental sources knew that the peoples *al-Khazar* and *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* lived in territories close to one another.

According to the Ibn Rusta (first third of the tenth century) between *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and *al-Khazar* there were the Volga Bulġar people (BGA VII, 141). Moreover, Ibn Rusta considered the river Itil as the border zone between *al-Khazar* and *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* (BGA VII, 141). According to Gardîzî (eleventh century) the Pechenegs (*Bajânak*) bordered with: from the South-West—the Khazars, from the West—the Slavs (*Saqlâb*); Itil, as with Ibn Rusta, was called a border between the territory of the Khazars and the land of the Slavs (*Gardîzî*, 37–38). Thus, according to those authors who transmitted the information of the so-called "Anonymous Note on the Peoples of Eastern Europe" (Ibn Rusta, Gardîzî, Muṭahhar ibn Ṭâhir al-Muqaddasî, al-Bakrî, al-Marvazî and others), the areas of the Khazars and the Slavs, though not neighbouring, were not far from one another; according to some data the border between them was the Itil (the medium part of the Volga). Muṭahhar ibn Ṭâhir al-Muqaddasî (tenth century) transmitted unspecific data on the location of the peoples of Eastern Europe, but cited some of his predecessors who mentioned that *al-Khazar, ar-Rûs, aṣ-Ṣaqâliba, Wallaj* (the Vlakhs ?), *al-Lân, ar-Rûm* et al., lived close to the Turks (*at-Turk*). (*El-Makdisi* IV, 66). Those authors, who followed more or less the "Anonymous Note" transmitted, in the following sequence, tales about the peoples of Eastern Europe: the Pechenegs—the Khazars—the Burṭâṣ—the Bulġars—the Magyars—the Slavs—the Rus'—the peoples of the North Caucasus.

Al-Iṣṭakhrî and Ibn Ḥawqal (tenth century), in composing their books, relied on their own materials (perhaps, partly taken from al-Balkhî's book and maps). They wrote that "to the west of the territorial holdings of Islam" lie the territories of Byzantium, of the Armenians,

the Alans, Arran, Sarîr, the Khazars, the Rus', the Bulġars, the Slavs and groups of the Turks (BGA I, 5; BGA II–2, 11). Shams ad-Din al-Muqaddasî (tenth century) mentioned that in the sixth "clime" there were situated the lands and towns of "Samarqand, Bardhaʿa, Qabala, *al-Khazar, al-Jîl* (Gîlân), the outskirts of *al-Andalus*, which is closer to the North, and the outskirts of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*, which is closer to the South (BGA III, 61). In the thirteenth century al-Ḥasan al-Marrakushî mentioned together the lands of *al-Khazar* and *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*; as lands about which various scholars had many contradictory data regarding their coordinates (Arabskije istochniki XII–XIII vekov, 163–164). Thus, the Arab writers had a sufficiently vivid picture of the territorial closeness of the Khazars and the Slavs.

Besides geographical information there is rather well known data on the military conflicts in which the Khazars and the Slavs participated. First of all, there is the much studied data of the historians al-Balâdhuri (IXth century) and Ibn Aʿtham al-Kûfî (tenth century) regarding the campaign of the Arab commander, Marwân ibn Muḥammad against the Khazars in 119/737, in the course of which, going through Khazar territory, he captured a great number of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* (20 thousand families) "who were in the land of the Khazars". He subsequently made an attempt to settle them at *Khâkhiṭ* (Kakhetia), but they escaped and were killed in flight. The Khazar khaqan was compelled to sue for peace on the condition that he accepted Islam (*al-Beládsori*, 207–208). Ibn Aʿtham al-Kûfî gave more details writing that Marwân reached the lands "beyond the Khazar lands" and assaulted "the *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and other types of pagans, bordering them, and captured 20 thousand families". Then he moved further and reached the "*aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* river," after which, having a great many *al-Khazar* and *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* prisoners, he demanded that the Khazar khaqan make peace with the condition that he accepted Islam (*Ibn Aʿtham al-Kûfî*, 49–50).

Scholars have different opinions on the route of the Arab commander. A. Garkavi supposed that there was only one reliable fact in the information about the events, namely that on the Khazar-Arab battlefield, the Slavs were fighting on the side of the Khazars (*Garkavi*, 41–43). J. Marquart thought that the Arabs reached the Don where they clashed with those Slavs, who were under the power of the Khazars (*Marquart*, 198–199). V. Bartold mentioned in passing that Marwân ibn Muḥammad "removed 20 thousand Slavs from the Khazar lands" (*Bartold*, 870) without specifying the geographical area. A.Z. Validi Togan thought that the lands around the Volga were meant, and that the term *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*

both here and in other Arab sources refers to the Turkic and the Finnic peoples in the vicinity of the Volga (*Togan*, 298–307, 365–369). D. Dunlop used this idea, proving that Marwân moved along the right bank of the Volga, in pursuit of the Khazar khaqan and reached the land of the Burṭâṣ, captured twenty thousand families of them and they were the ones whom the Arab sources called *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* (*Dunlop*, 82–84). M. Artamonov (*Artamonov*, 219–220), S. Pletniova (*Pletniova*, 38–40), P. Golden (*Golden* I, 64), T. Noonan (*Noonan*, 191) had the same point of view. D. Ludwig had no definite point of view on which exactly river is meant by "*nahr aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* " noting that it might be the Volga or the Don or some other East European river (*Ludwig*, 102, 150–151, note 256). A. Novoseltsev expressed a viewpoint close to J. Marquart's hypothesis, supposing that following the information of al-Balâdhurî and Ibn A'tham al-Kûfî, Marwân reached the Don after all, where he captured the polyethnic natives of the Don region including the Slavs; the Arab authors knew this ethnic name better than the others and therefore cited it alone. He correctly noted that the Arab sources never called the Burṭâṣ *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba.* (*Novoseltsev* 1990, 185–187).

There is yet one more piece of information about this war—in Khalîfa ibn Khayyâṭ's (died 854/55) "History". The author noting the names of his primary source and his informant, recounted that Marwân "set out in 114/732–33 and advanced until he crossed the river *R.m.m*; raiding, killing and capturing *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*". Under the year 119/737, he placed the information that "in that year Marwân ibn Muḥammad undertook a long march from *Arminiya*. He penetrated *Bab al-Lan*, crossed the land of the Alans, then crossed into the land of the Khazars, went through Balandjar and Samandar and reached *al-Baiḍâ* where khaqan resided. The khaqan fled the town" (*Beilis* 2000, 42). The data of the book of Khalifa ibn Khayyâṭ are completely original, do not depend on the literary sources, therefore the information of this author can be interpreted to indicate that Marwân began to make attacks on the land of the Slavs much earlier than the campaign of 737 alone.

It is important for the researchers to define what river the Arab scholars could have called "the river of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*". Unfortunately, it is impossible to define the river *R.m.m.* mentioned by Khalifa ibn Khayyâṭ and it is unlikely that it was that river which Marwân crossed in 732 when he attacked *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and in 737 when he was pursuing the Khazar khaqan. Ibn Khurradadhbeh was known to be the first to mention the river running from the remote Slav lands and entering into the Caspian Sea, near the Khazar city of Khamlîj. As mentioned above, the

Arab sources, including Ibn Aʿtham al-Kûfî, probably called "the river of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*" not some actual river, be it the Northern Donets, the Don (earlier the Tanais—called by the Arabs "Tanis") or the Volga; rather, what was reflected here was the general knowledge that the Arabs possessed about a river route from the remote lands of the Slavs to the Caspian Sea, including the northern rivers, the Don, the portages and the lower course of the Volga river—namely, the trade route which was long known to the Arabs (*Kalinina* 1986, 79–80). It is possible that Marwân had been in the regions along the Volga river, perhaps near the Stavropol highlands and the Ergeni mountains; where in the bend of the Volga, apparently, in this district which belonged to the Khazars, there were groups of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and other peoples from whom the twenty thousand captives were taken by the Arabs (*Kliashtornyi*, 16–18). Now, D. Mishin and N. Garaeva also suppose, that Marwân went along the Volga but not the Don (*Mishin*, 42–43; *Garaeva*, 441–442).

In this case, what is important for us is the fact itself of the close propinquity or even living together of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* and *al-Khazar*, it would appear, within the limits of of the Volga—Don zone.

Al-Yaʿqûbî, in his "History," related an episode under the year 240/854–55, when a people of Caucasus called *aṣ-Ṣanâriyya* (the Tzanars) appealed for help from the rulers of *ar-Rûm, al-Khazar* and *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* against the Arab governor-general in the Caucasus, Buga the Elder, and they gathered a large united force and without using arms forced the Caliphate the change its policy in the Caucasus. In this episode it is possible to see clearly the union of the two political forces headed apparently by Byzantium confronting the common enemy (*Dunlop*, 194). J. Marquart and then A. Novoseltsev did not exclude the possibility that the Tzanar's appealed to the Prince of Kiev for help (*Marquart*, 200; *Novoseltsev* 1965, 372); V.M. Beilis also supposed that one of the East Slavic rulers might be meant (*Beilis* 1986, 141).

In the oriental sources there is also information about direct contacts between representatives of the two peoples. Ibn Rusta and Gardîzî transmitted similar information that the Russes brought captured Slavs to the market in Khazaran—the Eastern part of the capital of Khazaria, the city of Itil (BGA VII, 45; *Gardîzî*, 39). Al-Iṣṭakhrî and Ibn Ḥawqal noted that slaves, among whom were Slavs and Khazars, were brought to Khwarizm for sale in the slave market (BGA I, 305; BGA II–2, 482). Al-Masʿûdî recounted directly that Slavs resided in Khazaria itself: that the Slavs and the Russes, who were in the Khazar land and its capital Itil cremated their dead; that the representatives of these peoples in the

Khazar capital had special judges who settled the disputes among them according to "pagan law and that is the law of reason"; that the Slavs and the Russes served in the troops of the Khazar rulers and could be the servants of the ruler (*Maçoudi* II, 11, 12, 64).

Finally, according to Ibrâhîm ibn Yaʿqûb's data (tenth century) preserved by al-Bakrî, the Khazars, the Russes, the Petchenegs, the Magyars and the Germans spoke Slavic since they mixed with the people of the Slavs (*al-Bakri*, 336). It is necessary to note that this information occupies entirely its own place in the general impression of the Arab authors regarding the Khazar language as either a Turkic language or as some other language that was quite different from the others (*Novoseltsev*, 1990, 85). Probably, Ibrâhîm ibn Yaʿqûb has given only his own personal impression gotten from representatives of peoples he encountered in the European towns visited by him and where the Khazars, the Russes, the Pechenegs and others employed the Slavic language as "lingua franca".

Thus, the Oriental writers and travelers, being rather far from the territory where the two peoples's meetings took place preserved, nevertheless, information about direct contacts between representatives of the two peoples: the Slavs, being either in the Khazar capital, in other Khazar districts or in rather distant lands, entered into military, political, commercial, every-day and cultural ties with the Khazar population; the literary, Biblical tradition preserved echoes of the co-existence of two peoples.

One should note that the Arab-Persian medieval scholars entirely ignored the conflicts beween the two peoples, although the the Old Rus' and Hebrew sources clearly testify to that. The Arabs knew and reported about the conflicts between Khazaria and representatives of the Old Rus' state, calling the latter the *ar-Rûs*; but these were inter-state, not ethnic conflicts. The ethnic name *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba* is not identified by the Arab writers with the name *ar-Rûs*, although the shared Eastern European area of habitation and the propinquity of the one to the other were known to them. It is just because of this that there is no special information about the conflicts between the Khazars and the Slavs in the Oriental sources.

Primary Sources

Alfraganus: Muhammedis Filii Ketiri Ferganensis qui vulgo *Alfraganus* dicitur. Elementa Astronomica, arabice et latine. Amstelodami, 1669.

Arabskie istochniki X–XII vv.: Arabskie istochniki X–XII vv. po etnografii i istorii Afriki iuzhnee Sakhary. M., 1965.

Arabskie istochniki XII–XII vv.: Arabskie istochniki XII–XII vv. po etnografii i istorii Afriki iuzhnee Sakhary. M., 1985.
al-Bakri: Kitâb al-Masâlik wa-l-Mamâlik d'Abu Ubaid al-Bakrî, Tunis, 1992. T. I–II.
al-Beládsori: Liber expugnationes regionum, auctore Imámo Ahmed ibn Jahja ibn Djábir al-Beládsori . . . Leiden, 1866.
BGA—Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum:
BGA I—Viae regnorum. Descriptio ditionis moslemicae auctore Abu Ishák al-Fárisí al-Istakhri. Leiden, 1870.
BGA III—Descriptio imperii moslemici auctore Schamso'd-dîn Abû 'Abdollâh Mohammed ibn Ahmed . . . al-Mokaddasi. Leiden, 1906.
BGA V—Compendium libri Kitâb al-Boldân auctore Ibn al-Fakîh al-Hamadânî. Leiden, 1885.
BGA VI—Kitâb al-Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik (Liber viarum et regnorum) auctore Abu'l-Kâsim 'Obaidallah ibn 'Abdallâh ibn Khordâdhbeh . . . Leiden, 1889.
BGA VII—Kitâb al-'Alâk an-nafîsa VII auctore Abu Ali Ahmed ibn Omar ibn Rosteh . . . Leiden, 1892.
BGA VIII—Kitâb at-tanbîh wa'l-ischrâf auctore al-Mas'ûdî. Leiden, 1894.
Gardîzî: *Bartold V.V.* <Izvlechenie iz sochineniia Gardizi "Zain al-akhbar> // *Bartold V.V.* Sochineniia. M., 1973. T. VIII. S. 23–63.
al-Huwarizmi: Das Kitâb Ṣûrat al-arḍ des Abu Dja'far Muhammed Ibn Musa al-Huwarizmi. Leipzig, 1926.
Ibn A'tham al-Kufî: Aḥmad ibn A'tham al-Kûfî. Kniga zavoevanii. Per. Z.M. Buniiatova. Baku, 1981.
Ibn Coteiba: Ibn Coteiba's Handbuch der Geschichte…/ F. Wüstenfeld. Göttingen, 1850.
al-Ja'qubi: Ibn Wadhîh qui dicitur *al-Ja'qûbî* Historiae. Leiden, 1883. T. I–II.
Jacut: Jacut's geographische Wörterbuch . . . Leipzig, 1866–1870. Bd. I–VI.
el-Maqdisi: Le Livre de la création et de l'histoire de Motahhar b. Tahir el-Maqdisi . . . Paris, 1899–1919. T. 1–6.
Maçoudi: *Maçoudi*. Les Prairies d'or. Paris, 1861–1877. T. I–IX
Seippel: *Seippel A*. Rerum normannicarum fontes arabici. Oslo, 1896.
at-Tabarî: Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed ibn Djarir at-Tabarî. Leiden, 1879–1901. T. I–III.

Literature

Altheim: *Altheim F*. Geschichte der Hunnen. Berlin, 1959–1962. Bd. I–IV.
Artamonov: *Artamonov M.I.* Istoriia khazar. Leningrad, 1962.
Bartold: Bartold V.V. Slaviane // *Bartold V.V.* Sochineniia. M., 1963. T. II Tch. 1.
Beilis 1986: *Beilis V.M.* Arabskie avtory IX—pervoi poloviny X v. o gosudarstvennosti i plemennom stroje narodov Evropy // Drevneishie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR. Materialy i issledovaniia. 1985 god. M., 1986.
Beilis 2000: *Beilis V.M.* Soobshcheniia Khalify ibn Khaiiata al-'Usfuri ob arabo-khazarskich voinakh v VII—pervoi polovine VIII v. // Drevneishie gosudarstva na territorii Vostotchnoi Evropy. Pamiati A.P. Novoseltseva. M., 2000.
Garaeva: *Garaeva N.G.* Svedeniia arabskih i persidskikh istochnikov o pokhodakh k severu ot Derbenta (22/642–43 и 119/737 gg. // Istoriia tatar s drevneishikh vremion v semi tomakh. T.I. Narody stepnoi Evrazii v drevnosti. Kazan, 2002.
Garkavi: *Garkavi A.I.* Skazaniia musulmanskikh pisatelei o slavianakh i russkikh. SPb, 1870.
Daunicht: *Daunicht H*. Der Osten nach der Erdkarte al-Huwarizmi's. Bonn, 1970–1974. Bd. I–IV.
Dunlop: *Dunlop D.M.* The History of the Jewish Khazars. Princeton (New Jersey), 1954.

Golden: *Golden P.B.* Khazar Studies. The Historic-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars. Budapest, 1980. Vol. I–II.
Kalinina 1986: *Kalinina T.M.* Torgovye puti Vostochnoi Evropy (po dannym Ibn Khordadhbeha i Ibn al-Faqiha // Istorija SSSR. M., 1986. No. 4.
Kalinina 1988: *Kalinina T.M.* Svedeniia rannikh uchionykh Arabskogo Khalifata (Drevneishie istochniki po istorii narodov SSSR). Teksty, perevod, kommentarii. M., 1988.
Kliashtornyi: *Kliashtornyi S.G.* Drevneishee upominanie slavian v Nizhnem Povolzhie // Vostochnoi istotchniki po istorii narodov Iugo-Vostotchnoi i Tsentralnoi Evropy. M., 1964. Vyp. I.
Krachkovskii: *Krachkovskii I.I.* Arabskaia geograficheskaia literatura // *Krachkovskii I.I.* Izbrannye sochineniia. M., 1957. T. IV.
Kriukov: Kriukov V.G. Soobshcheniia anonimnogo arabskogo avtora "Akhbar az-zaman" ("Mukhtasar al-ʿAdjaib") o narodakh Evropy // Drevneishie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR. Materialy i issledovaniia. 1981 god. M., 1983.
Kunik, Rosen: *Kunik A.A., Rosen V.R.* Izvestiia al-Bekri i drugikh avtorov o Rusi i slavianakh. SPb, 1878. Tch. I.
Lewicki: *Lewicki T.* Źródłla arabskie do dziejów Słowiańszczyzny. Wrocław, 1956. T. I.
Ludwig: *Ludwig D.* Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches im Licht den schriftlischen Quellen. Münster, 1982.
Marquart: *Marquart J.* Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge. Leipzig, 1903.
Mishin: *Mishin D.E.* Saqaliba (slaviane) v islamskom mire v rannee srednevekov'e. M., 2002.
Novoseltsev 1965: *Novoseltsev A.P.* Vostochnye istochniki o vostochnykh slavianakh i Rusi VI–IX vv. // Drevnerusskoe gosudarstvo i ego mezhdunarodnoe znachenie. M., 1965.
Novoseltsev 1990: *Novoseltsev A.P.* Khazarskoe gosudarstvo i ego mezhdunarodnoe znachenie v istorii Vostotchnoi Evropy i Kavkaza. M., 1990.
Noonan: *Noonan Th. S.* Why Dirhams First Reached Russia: The Role of Arab-Khazar Relations in the Development of the Earliest Islamic Trade with Eastern Europe // Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi. Wiesbaden, 1984. N 4.
Pletniova: Pletniova S.A. Khazary. M., 1986.
Togan: *Togan Zeki Validi A.* Ibn Faḍlān's Reisebericht. Leipzig, 1939.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE ECONOMY OF THE KHAZAR KHAGANATE

Thomas S. Noonan[1]

Introduction

In general, the study of the Khazar economy has been overshadowed by such controversial issues as the origins of the Khazars, their relations with neighboring states, the nature of kingship in Khazaria, and their conversion to Judaism. When the economy has been examined, scholars tend to focus upon Khazaria's role as an intermediary in the great Viking-age trade of the Islamic world with northern Russia and the Baltic. Aside from several archaeological studies, relatively little attention has been paid to the internal economy of the khaganate itself. And, when the domestic economy is considered, the famous remark of Iṣṭakhrī is often quoted: "The Khazar country produces nothing which can be exported to other lands except isinglass. As to the slaves, honey, wax, beaver and other skins, they are imported to Khazaria."[2] It is therefore no wonder then that even such an astute analyst as Douglas Dunlop could conclude his survey of the Khazar economy with such statements as "there were no large natural resources available for export, nor a steady supply of products of home industry. The Khazar economy in these circumstances appears as highly artificial"[3] and "the prosperity of Khazaria evidently depended less on the resources of the country than on its favorable position across important trade-routes."[4] This characterization of the Khazar economy as "highly artificial" seems very incongruous since in the preceding pages Dunlop noted the rather extensive written evidence for pastoralism, agriculture, and craft production in Khazaria.[5] Furthermore, he did not stress that other written sources contradict Iṣṭakhrī's

[1] Thomas Noonan passed away in 2000. This paper was edited by his former student and collaborator on a number of scholarly projects, Dr. Roman K. Kovalev.

[2] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in D.M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton: 1954), p. 96.

[3] Dunlop, *History*, p. 233.

[4] Dunlop, *History*, p. 232.

[5] Dunlop, *History*, pp. 224–233.

assessment. The *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam,* for example, specifically mentions the export of sheep from the Khazar country[6] while Masʿūdī noted the many Muslim artisans who dwelt in Ītil.[7] Finally, Dunlop did not utilize any archaeological evidence, evidence which demonstrates beyond any doubt that extensive agriculture and craft production were found throughout the khaganate. Consequently, Dunlop's appraisal of the Khazar economy cannot be accepted.

This study will attempt to demonstrate that the economy of Khazaria was far from artificial. The term "economy of Khazaria" is employed rather than the more traditional "Khazar economy" in order to emphasize the fact that the economy of the khaganate encompassed the economies of all the dependent peoples and was not confined to just that of the dominant Khazars. According to Ibn Faḍlān, the Khazar khagan has 25 wives, each of whom was the daughter of a neighboring king who was taken either voluntarily or by force.[8] In other words, the khagan ruled over 25 distinct peoples. The Jewish traveler Eldad ha-Dani stated that there were 25 or 28 nations which were tributary to the Khazars.[9] In his *Reply*, the Khazar Khagan Joseph claims that he collected tribute from numerous peoples. It is hard to calculate the exact number from Joseph's account but there are a minimum of 38.[10] Dunlop does not count those living along the shores of the Caspian nor the Pechenegs and he assumes the 9 peoples living along the Volga were 9 Khazar nations. He thus concludes that 28 tributary peoples are mentioned by Khagan Joseph.[11] The exact number is less important than the fact that the Khazar khaganate encompassed a minimum of 25 different tributary peoples and perhaps as many as 40 or more. To understand the domestic economy of the Khazar khaganate it is necessary to examine the economies of the

---

[6] *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam, 'The Regions of the World': A Persian Geography, 372 A.H.–982 A.D.*, tr, and comm. V. Minorsky, 2nd ed., ed. C.E. Bosworth (London: 1970), pp. 161–162.

[7] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, Ch. 17, tr. and comm. in: V. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband* (Cambridge: 1958), pp. 147–148.

[8] Ibn Faḍlān, *The Risālah of Ibn Faḍlān*, intro. and tr. James E. McKeithen [Indiana University Doctoral Dissertation] (Bloomington: 1979), pp. 156–157.

[9] Quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 141.

[10] "The Reply of the Khazar Khagan Joseph," in P.K. Kokovtsov, *Evreisko-khazarskaia perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad: 1932), pp. 81–83 (the Short Redaction), pp. 98–102 (the Extended Redaction).

[11] Dunlop, *History*, p. 141.

tributary peoples who composed the khaganate. While it is impossible to identify and analyze the economy of each tributary nation, it is possible to examine the economies of the various regions of Khazaria. The domestic economy will thus be analyzed in terms of regions.

This study will also attempt to demonstrate that the Khazar khaganate had a diversified mixture of pastoralism, agriculture, foraging, and craft production. No single survival strategy dominated Khazaria. Rather, the strength and durability of the khaganate can be attributed to its diversified economic base. Unlike those nomads who were dependent upon the food, goods, and luxury items coming from sedentary neighbors, the khaganate was remarkably self-sufficient. It was this ability to provide for almost all of its essential requirements that enabled the Khazar khaganate to survive far longer than any other "nomadic" state in the south Russian-Ukrainian steppe.

The traditional approach to Khazaria's foreign trade might be called "static." It attempts to create a composite picture of Khazaria's international commerce based on the written sources. A careful scrutiny of this data produces a synthesis describing how this trade presumably functioned at one given time. While there is considerable value in such an approach, it fails to reveal the evolution of Khazaria's international commerce. The role of Khazaria in the trade of the Islamic world with European Russian and the Baltic was constantly changing over the course of two centuries as was the volume of trade going through Ītil. The literary evidence fails to capture the dynamic nature of Khazaria's foreign commerce. However, an analysis of the thousands of dirham hoards deposited throughout western Eurasia does provide important insights into the fluctuations in the volume of trade going through the khaganate. In particular, it points to a fundamental transformation which took place in the international commerce of Khazaria ca. 900 and highlights one of the developments that led to the collapse of the khaganate ca. 965. In short, the numismatic data shows that Khazaria's foreign trade was far from static; rather, it was subject to constant changes as well as a major reorientation ca. 900.

In sum, the strength, endurance, and vitality of the Khazar khaganate rested on the twin pillars of a diversified domestic economy and a lucrative foreign commerce. The former made the khaganate self-sufficient in many key areas and thus less dependent upon neighbors who were potential enemies. The lucrative international trade provided immense income for the state. These revenues were used, among other things, to reinforce the army through the employment of large numbers of Muslim

auxiliaries from Khwārizm.[12] This enlarged army, in turn, ensured the collection of tribute from the 25 or more dependent peoples and provided the security that made Khararia a safe place for merchants to do business. If the economy had been more specialized and less dynamic, Khazaria would not have endured as a major power in southeastern Europe for over two centuries.

Originally, it had been my intention to examine the economy of all the different areas of Khazaria and to evaluate in some detail Khazaria's role in the Viking-age trade of western Eurasia. However, it soon became evident that such a study would seriously transgress the limitations of space. Consequently, what follows is a discussion of several selected regions and an analysis of some key aspects of Khazaria's foreign trade.

The Domestic Economy

The Capital of Ītil

The Khazar capital of Ītil located somewhere in the delta of the Volga was divided into two or three parts. The two main sections were the western part, called Khazarān, where the king, his entourage, and purebred Khazars lived and the eastern part, called Ītil**,** where most of the merchants, craftsmen, and foreigners resided.[13] Among the residents of the eastern part could be found Jews, Christians, Muslims, and slaves of many nationalities. Khagan Joseph indicated that the dimensions of the western part were 3×3 *farsakhs* while those of the eastern part were 8×8 *farsakhs*.[14] The two parts of Ītil reflect the dual role of the capital. First of all, it was the political capital of the khaganate and the residence of the khagan, beg, and other Khazar officials. Second, Ītil functioned as

[12] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, pp. 146–147; Gardīzī, "Gardīzī's Two Chapters on the Turks," tr. and comm. A.P. Martinez, *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 2(1982), p. 154, specifically states that part of the 10,000–man Khazar army of was salaried.

[13] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, pp. 91, 93, and fn. 10, p. 91; "The Reply of the Khagan Joseph," pp. 84–85 (the Short Redaction), pp. 102 (the Extended Redaction). According to Joseph, the tsaritsa of the khagan lived in the third part of the capital. Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, pp. 158–159, puts it very succinctly: "On one of the two sides [of the river] are the Muslims, while on the other side are the king and his companions."

[14] "The Reply of the Khagan Joseph," pp. 84–85 (the Short Redaction), p. 102 (the Extended Redaction).

the great market of the khaganate where merchants from all over western Eurasia came to conduct business. These two roles determined the economic profile of the city.

The large concentration of Khazars officials, foreign merchants, their servants, slaves and retinues, as well as the craftsmen who provided for their needs created a huge demand for food and supplies. Population figures for Ītil are hard to come by and suspect when available. One source states that there were 7,000 Muslim mercenaries in Khazar service, a large number of whom presumably resided in the capital.[15] In addition, the Khazar army included Rūs, Ṣaqāliba, and pagan mercenaries, many of whom also lived in Ītil.[16] It was also asserted that the khagan had 4,000 attendants and that more than 10,000 Muslims could be found in the capital.[17] These figures omit many other residents. Even if we discount the likely exaggeration in these numbers, there is no question that Ītil had a significant population of many thousands who had to be fed and provided for. In part, this demand was met by the fields, vineyards, and gardens of the khagan which were located within his part of the city.[18] In terms of food and other basic items, the khagan and his officials were partially self-sufficient. However, the khagan's fields within Khazarān clearly did not provide for the entire population of the capital. Consequently, a large agricultural area based on irrigation was created outside the city whose grains and vegetables provided a large and reliable source of food for Ītil. This "green belt" will be discussed in the next section.

The infrastructure for Khazaria's vast international trade was located in the eastern part of the capital. Here were found the customs' officials who collected the tithe that had to be paid by merchants who either frequented the markets of Ītil or passed by the capital while sailing on the Volga.[19] Also located in the capital was the main commercial court that handled disputes among merchants. This tribunal consisted of seven judges (two for the Muslims, two for the (Jewish) Khazars, two for the

[15] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 147.
[16] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 147.
[17] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 92.
[18] "The Reply of the Khagan Joseph," p. 87 (the Short Redaction), p. 103 (the Extended Redaction).
[19] Ibn Khurdādhbeh quoted in Omeljan Pritsak, "An Arabic Text on the Trade Route of the Corporation of Ar-Rūs in the Second Half of the Ninth Century," *Folia Orientalia*, 12(1970), p. 257; Ibn Khurdādhbeh quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 99, n. 44.

Christians, and one for the various pagans).[20] Ibn Faḍlān adds, however, that legal decisions concerning Muslim merchants who come to Ītil for trade are the provenance of a Muslim *ghulām* or special official of the Khazar rulers who acted as their sole judge.[21] Here also were the dwellings of the many Muslim merchants and artisans who resided in the capital. They had reportedly been attracted to Ītil by the justice and security that existed in Khazaria.[22] The number of Muslim merchants, artisans, and mercenaries in the capital was so great that they had several mosques as well as religious schools.[23] The warehouses of the foreign merchants appear to have been located in this part of the capital as well.[24] For their services in providing a safe place for Muslim artisans, a protected environment in which Muslim merchants could trade, and employment for Muslim mercenaries, the Khazars collected taxes from the Muslims based on the amount of their wealth.[25] The eastern part of the capital was thus the home for most of the merchants involved in Khazaria's international trade, the location of the craftshops that serviced this trade, the place where the goods being bought and sold were stored, and the center for most other activities connected with this trade.

The Khazar administration headquartered in Ītil collected considerable revenue in the form of tribute, tithes and taxes. According to Khagan Joseph, the Khazars collected tribute from all (25–40+) dependent peoples. Unfortunately, Joseph does not indicate what form this tribute took. The tributaries living in the forest steppe and forest zones apparently paid primarily in fur. The Volga Bulghārs, for example, were required to give the Khazars one sable skin per household.[26] Similarly, the East Slavic tribes of the middle Dnepr and the upper Oka paid the khagan one squirrel pelt per hearth.[27] However, if our source is to be trusted, this tribute in fur was later changed to a payment of one dirham per ploughshare.[28] In other words, in those areas where the local peoples

---

[20] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 147; *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, pp. 161–162, where it is stated that the seven judges or governors consult with the Khazar king on their decisions.
[21] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, pp. 158–159.
[22] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, pp. 147–148.
[23] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, pp. 147–148.
[24] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 93.
[25] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," pp. 153–154.
[26] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, p. 125.
[27] *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, tr. and ed. S.H. Cross and O.P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass.: 1953), p. 59.
[28] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, pp. 61, 84.

could acquire sufficient silver coins in return for their furs, the Khazars levied a monetary tribute. The Khazar tributaries who did not live in the forests where fur-bearing animals abounded undoubtedly paid in other goods which they possessed. Nomads such as the Pechenegs may have provided sheep, cattle, horses, hides, and wax to Ītil. At least, as we shall see, these were the goods that they traded with the Rus' and the people of Cherson**.** The story/legend that the East Slavic tribe of the Kiev area gave one sword per hearth to the Khazars suggests that those peoples with developed craft production no doubt provided some of their manufactured goods to the Khazars as tribute.[29] In any event, the many peoples subordinated to the Khazars paid what they could, but they did pay regularly. As Iṣṭakhrī noted, the Khazar ruler collected "regular payments assessed on the people of the different places and districts, consisting of every description of food, drink, etc.…"[30]

Tithes collected from merchants formed another major source of income. Iṣṭakhrī claimed that the treasury of the Khazar government depended on the customs' dues and tithes collected along every land, river and sea route[31] while the *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* indicated that "the well-being and wealth of the king of the Khazars are mostly from maritime customs."[32] The earliest report on Rūs trade with the Khazars notes that the Rūs merchants who visited the Khazar capital paid the khagan a tithe.[33] The tithe was so ubiquitous that it was adopted by the tributary peoples themselves. The Volga Bulghārs, for example, collected a tithe on the goods brought to their realm by ships coming from Khazaria.[34] Finally, the Khazar beg levied taxes on the inhabitants of the capital. The Muslim population, for instance, paid an annual tax based on its wealth.[35] However, Iṣṭakhrī claims that the Khazar ruler had "no right to the property of his subjects," which suggests that personal taxes may only have been collected from Muslims and presumably other non-Khazars who were non-residents/foreigners.[36] In short, Ītil was the center of an extensive tax-collecting system that amassed vast sums of goods and

[29] *Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 58.
[30] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 93.
[31] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 93.
[32] *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, pp. 161–162.
[33] Ibn Khurdādhbeh quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 99, n. 44.
[34] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, p. 125.
[35] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," pp. 153–154.
[36] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 93.

some coin as tribute, tithes, and taxes. It was this great revenue which paid for the large army that ensured that dependent peoples paid tribute annually, that routes and markets were safe for merchants, and that a prosperous Khazaria was protected from its many enemies.

The Lower Volga

As part of the western Eurasian steppe, the lower Volga region surrounding the capital might easily be dismissed as simply a land of pastures where sheep, horses, and other nomadic animals grazed. Maqdasī claimed that the Volga steppes in the neighborhood of Ītil were bare and dry without cattle or fruits.[37] And, when William of Rubruck passed through the lower Volga in the mid-thirteenth century, he reported that the Mongol leader Buri, whose pasture lands were not good, once complained when drunk: "Why may I not go to the banks of the Etilia like Batu to feed my flocks there?"[38] Apparently Batu had taken the best grazing lands along the Volga and was so determined to keep them that he had Buri executed for his remarks. Contrary to what one might expect, however, the Khazar capital of Ītil was surrounded by an extensive agricultural region. According to the Khazar Khagan Joseph, the Khazar ruling elite normally spent the winter in Ītil and then, around April, left the capital in order to pass the time until late fall amongst their fields, meadows and vineyards that extended at least twenty *farsakhs* (ca. sixty miles?) into the countryside. Some of these fields were apparently passed down from generation to generation within the various clans suggesting that agriculture had long been practiced here.[39] Iṣṭakhrī confirmed this report noting that the Khazars, who possessed extensive farms, go as far as twenty leagues from Ītil in the summer to work their fields. He added that the crops gathered along the river were brought to the capital by water while the crops collected in the steppe were transported by carts.[40]

---

[37] Maqdasī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 224.

[38] "The Journey of William of Rubruck," in *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, tr. Anonymous, ed. Christopher Dawson (New York: 1955), p. 135.

[39] "The Reply of the Khazar Khagan Joseph," pp. 85–86 (the Short Redaction) and pp. 102–103 (the Extended Redaction). There is an English translation of this passage in Peter B. Golden, *Khazar Studies: An historico-philological inquiry into the origins of the Khazars*, I (Budapest: 1980), pp. 104–105.

[40] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 93.

Gardīzī mentioned the "many tilled fields and orchards of the Khazar country."[41] In short, there can be no doubt that a "green belt" consisting of fields, farms, gardens, vineyards and orchards extended for some 50 or 60 miles around the capital.

The green belt surrounding Ītil was not necessarily naturally fertile. Khagan Joseph, for example, indicated that his country did not get much rain.[42] The Khazar elite had turned the area around the capital into a rich and productive region with numerous fields, meadows, vineyards, gardens and parks through an extensive system of irrigation using water from the Volga system.[43] Ītil was thus kept supplied with food grown by the Khazar elite on their garden farms surrounding the capital. Furthermore, the khagan's residence in the capital was surrounded by his personal fields, vineyards, gardens and parks.[44] The Khazar ruling elite, starting with the khagan, had ensured a reliable supply of grains, fruits[45] and vegetables for themselves.

As for apiculture, we have already noted the oft-cited comment of Iṣṭakhrī that "slaves, honey, wax, beaver and other skins" found in Khazaria were all imports.[46] However, it is important to remember that Gardīzī specifically states that there is much honey and good wax in the Khazar country.[47] Furthermore, the *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* makes particular mention of the Khazar slaves exported to the Islamic world which come from the country of the Khazarian Pechenegs.[48] In sum, there are good reasons to question Iṣṭakhrī's comments that little or nothing came from Khazaria and everything was imported from elsewhere. Good evidence exists that honey and wax were among the products of the Khazar lands, an area which included the region around the capital.

In addition to the produce of their fields, the capital was also sustained by huge quantities of fish from the rivers of the Volga delta.

---

[41] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 155.
[42] "The Reply of the Khazar Khagan Joseph," p. 86 (the Short Redaction), p. 103 (the Extended Redaction).
[43] "The Reply of the Khazar Khagan Joseph," p. 86 (the Short Redaction), p. 103 (the Extended Redaction), where the many springs of Khazaria are also mentioned.
[44] "The Reply of the Khazar Khagan Joseph," p. 87 (the Short Redaction), p. 103 (the Extended Redaction).
[45] "The Reply of the Khazar Khagan Joseph," p. 87 (the Short Redaction) specifically states that Khazaria has numerous fruit trees.
[46] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 96.
[47] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 155.
[48] *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, p. 160.

Joseph remarked that many fish grow in the numerous rivers of his country.[49] According to Iṣṭakhrī, fish was one of the chief foods of the Khazars.[50] The abundant fish of the lower Volga were commented on later by Rubruck.[51] In addition, parts of the lower Volga were probably used as grazing lands. Maqdasī mentioned the numerous sheep of the Khazar country[52] while another source noted the famous Khazar sheep that could give birth twice each year.[53] These accounts help to explain the report of sheep and cows exported from the Khazar country.[54] Ītil thus had convenient access to supplies of fish, lamb and beef from the surrounding steppe.

There were apparently grazing grounds for horses as well in the lower Volga. The Khazar army apparently consisted of 12,000 men[55] of whom around 7,000 consisted of Muslim mercenary cavalrymen.[56] The remaining 5,000 troops presumably included Khazar horsemen. A cavalry force this size required a regular and reliable supply of horses that was no doubt met, in large part, by horses raised in the lower Volga steppe. The sources tend to confirm this assumption. During Marwān's 737 campaign along the lower Volga, the Arabs apparently destroyed large studs.[57] Another source commented upon the unusually big Khazar horses.[58] The region surrounding the capital was thus not entirely devoted to agriculture. Some of it was seemingly devoted to pastoral nomadism. However, it is good to keep in mind Zakhoder's comments on the relative importance of pastoral nomadism and agriculture amongst the Khazars: "it would be a mistake to think that cattle raising [i.e., pastoralism] occupied a significant place in the description of Khazar life by our sources. The oriental sources concentrate in a more detailed way on agriculture."[59] The relatively greater attention given to agriculture no doubt reflects its relative importance in the lower Volga.

---

[49] "The Reply of the Khazar Khagan Joseph," p. 32 (the Short Redaction), p. 103 (the Extended Redaction).
[50] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 93.
[51] Rubruck, "Journey," p. 210.
[52] Maqdasī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 224.
[53] al-Bakrī quoted in B.N. Zakhoder, *Kaspiiskii svod svedenii o Vostochnoi Evrope*, I (Moscow: 1962), p. 139.
[54] *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, pp. 161–162.
[55] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, pp. 92–93.
[56] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 147.
[57] Bal'amī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 225.
[58] Ibn Saʿīd quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 225.
[59] Zakhoder, *Kaspiiskii*, I, p. 139.

The prominence of agriculture among the "nomadic" Khazars may help to explain the "ritual" nomadism of the Khazar khagans. The Khagan Joseph, after noting that the Khazars went out of the capital to work their fields during the summer and fall, adds: "and from there we go around (our land)…not returning home till winter."[60] This comment is essentially repeated by several other Islamic sources. Marvazī, for example, states that the Khazars dwell in their cities during the winter "but with the approach of spring they go out into the deserts, where they spend all summer."[61] He adds that the Khazar "king" is accompanied by 10,000 horsemen wherever he goes.[62] Gardīzī repeats the same story: in the spring the Khazars go out into the steppes and do not return to their towns until the winter.[63] Gy. Györffy has provided an insightful analysis of this type of ritual nomadism. In the concise summary of Peter Golden, Györffy "has shown that nomadism in the river-rich steppelands of Eastern Europe differed from that of Central Asia. He notes of the 'semi-nomadic' Hungarians that they lived alongside the rivers where they had their winter quarters. Winters they spent fishing. In spring they went to nearby land where they planted their grain and then they drove their cattle into the steppes for pasturing. They returned there for harvest time. They had no fixed summer quarters and the distances travelled were not great. The upper class, however, travelled great distances parallel to the rivers between their winter and summer quarters. Thus, it was only the upper class, the ruler and his retinue that nomadized over great distances. This system as Györffy points out, was true for the Hungarians, Khazars and Mongols."[64] The Hungarians may have adopted this form of semi-nomadism due to the limited amount of steppe land available in the Hungarian plain. The Khazars, however, adopted semi-nomadism for different reasons. To assure that the capital with its large population of Khazar elite, merchants from all over

[60] "The Reply of the Khazar Khagan Joseph," pp. 86–87 (the Short Redaction), p. 102 (the Extended Redaction).

[61] Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marvazī, *Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marvazī on China, the Turks and India, Arabic text (circa 1120)*, tr. and comm. V. Minorsky [James G. Forlong Fund Vol. XXII], London: 1942), p. 33.

[62] Marvazī, *China, the Turks*, p. 33.

[63] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 153.

[64] Golden, *Khazar Studies*, pp. 103–104, fn. 320; Gy. Györffy, "Système des résidences d'hiver et d'été chez les nomades et les chefs hongrois au X^{e} siècle," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 1(1975), pp. 45–153.

western Eurasia, and diverse mercenaries had an adequate supply of food, it was necessary to create an irrigated green belt around Ītil. The vegetables, grains, and fruits obtained from this green belt were supplemented with the meat of sheep and cattle that were also grazed in the same area. Finally, the residents of the capital enjoyed the many fish found in the waters of the lower Volga while horses needed for the cavalry were grazed in the vicinity of the capital as well. Economically, the lower Volga was a multi-use region which provided for a number of the basic needs of Ītil.

The Volga-Dnepr Steppelands

Going west from the capital, one entered a vast steppe that extended as far as the lower Danube. However, the effective control of the khaganate only seems to have reached the lower Dnepr so we shall confine ourselves to this part of the steppe. This region was dominated by the nomadic Pechenegs in the ninth and tenth centuries and was thus home to an extensive pastoral economy.[65] The Khagan Joseph, after noting that the Pechenegs nomadize and live in the steppe, asserts that "they all serve (me) and pay me tribute."[66] However, the contemporaneous *De Administrando Imperio* by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus paints a very different picture. Here the Pechenegs are depicted as a group of eight independent tribes occupying the steppe between the Don and the Dnestr who served as Byzantine hirelings in fighting the Hungarians, Rus' and other Byzantine enemies.[67] Since Constantine was very well informed about the Pechenegs, it would seem that Joseph's claim is an exaggeration. Islamic sources also report that the Khazars war on the Pechenegs each year and bring back booty and slaves from the Pecheneg lands.[68] Joseph may well have been harkening back to an earlier time when the Khazars had defeated the Pechenegs.[69] In any event, there were numerous horses and sheep in the Pecheneg lands[70] and the Pechenegs sold horned cattle, horses, and sheep to the

[65] Masʿūdī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 212, states that there were four Turkic tribes living west of Khazaria, one of which was the Bajnāk or Pechenegs.
[66] "The Reply of the Khazar Khagan Joseph," p. 102 (the Extended Redaction).
[67] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, tr. R.J.H. Jenkins (Budapest: 1949), Ch. 1, 4, 37.
[68] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 154.
[69] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, Ch. 37, pp. 166–171.
[70] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 152.

Rus'[71] as well as hides and wax to the people of Cherson.[72] At the same time, the economy of the Pechenegs and related tribes was not based entirely on pastoralism. Masʿūdī, for example, noted that the four Turkic tribes living to the west of Khazaria, including the Pechenegs, were "both nomad and settled."[73] Unfortunately, he did not elaborate on their "settled" way of life. Presumably, it included some agriculture and perhaps modest craft production. However, well-developed pastoralism and, possibly, limited agriculture and craft production, did not fulfill all of their material needs. As a result, the Pechenegs engaged in constant raids against their neighbors from which they collected numerous slaves as well as other booty (gold and silver vessels, weapons, silver belts).[74] The Pechenegs, to the extent that they figured in the Khazar economy, were primarily nomads who had surplus animals and animal byproducts to sell. It is not certain, however, that the Khazars had a need for such products. It is not clear either whether the Pechenegs constituted a market for the agricultural produce and craft goods emanating from the khaganate.

While the literary sources for this region are limited, there is an abundance of archaeological evidence on the Don steppe region in particular. Fortunately, this data on the economy of the Don during the Khazar era was systematically evaluated in the fine monograph of Mikheev.[75] The findings of Mikheev were also incorporated into my earlier study of the Khazar economy.[76] Consequently, this information does not have to be repeated here. However, it is important to stress that the diversified economy of this area contained well developed agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, hunting, and craft production.

The Crimea

Written sources provide relatively little information about the Khazarian Crimea. Byzantine sources confirm that in the eighth century the Khazars controlled a large part of the Crimea and even had substantial

[71] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, Ch. 1, pp. 48–49.
[72] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, Ch. 53, pp. 286–287.
[73] Masʿūdī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 212.
[74] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 152.
[75] V.K. Mikheev, *Podon'e v sostave Khazarskogo Kaganata* (Khar'kov: 1985).
[76] Thomas S. Noonan, "The Khazar Economy," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 9 (1995–1997), pp. 253–318.

influence in the main Byzantine center of Kherson. However, there is little evidence about the Khazar position in the Crimea during the ninth and tenth century in these sources and some scholars believe that by the tenth century much of the Crimea had once again come under Byzantine rule. On the other hand, Khagan Joseph specifically lists a number of Crimean towns that were under Khazar rule at the time he was writing, i.e., ca. 950: K-r-ts (Bospor, Kerch), Sug-rai (Sugdeia/Sudak), Alus (Aluston, Lusta), L-m-b-t (Lambat = Greek Cape), B-r-t-nit (Partenit), Alubikha (Alupha), Kut (Kuti/Skuti), Man-t (Mangup), Bur-k (?), Alma (Alma), and G-ruzin (?).[77] While many commentators suggest that Joseph's information was out of date,[78] others consider his statement as an accurate account of the Khazar domain in the Crimea during the mid-tenth century.[79] In short, there is no agreement on the extent of the Khazar territories in the Crimea during the ninth and tenth centuries.

It is not our intention here to enter into the controversy over the timeliness of Joseph's information. The important point is that large parts of the Crimea came under Khazar control for several centuries between ca. 650 and ca. 950. Furthermore, while the written sources tell us virtually nothing about the economy of the Khazarian Crimea, there is abundant archaeological data that has been brought together recently in an excellent study by Baranov.[80] Using this data, it is possible to reconstruct the economy of the Khazarian Crimea in considerable detail.

At the start of the early middle ages, the Crimea was divided into two climatic/economic/cultural zones. In the Kerch peninsula and along the southern coasts and slopes of some of the river valleys dwelt a sedentary, agricultural population that possessed a provincial Byzantine culture formed from the synthesis of the local agrarian population (mainly Alan) and the Byzantinized towns, most notably Kherson. Most of the Crimea, however, consisted of a dry steppe area that extended westward across the northern and central parts of the peninsula to the high

[77] "The Reply of the Khagan Joseph," p. 102 (the Extended Redaction).

[78] At a 1988 conference on research problems connected with Kherson, A.G. Gertsen argued (*Vizantiiskii vremennik*, 51(1990), p. 234) that the account of Khazar territory in the Crimea given by Khagan Joseph in the extended redaction of his letter described the situation in the second half of the ninth and early tenth century.

[79] I.A. Baranov, *Tavrika v epokhu rannego srednevekov'ia (saltovo-maiatskaia kul'tura)* (Kiev: 1990), p. 54, states that Joseph's description of the territory of the khaganate reflects the historical reality of 954–961. He also argues, p. 152, that at the time Joseph wrote the Khazars ruled most of the Crimea.

[80] Baranov, *Tavrika*.

plains of the Kerch peninsula and the mountains to the south. This zone was intensively utilized by nomads for grazing their herds. In fact, the Bulghār nomads of the Azov-Kuban region used the Crimean steppe as a seasonal pasturage for their herds. In the mid seventh century, when the Khazars defeated the Bulghārs, many of the latter found themselves stranded in the Crimean steppe with no home in the Kuban-Azov region to which they could return. Forced to adapt to an area which traditionally only supported a seasonal nomadic population, the Bulghār nomads found that there was not enough grazing land to support all of their flocks year round. Consequently, starting in the second half of the seventh century, many of these nomads were forced to adopt a sedentary way of life in order to survive, a process that accelerated around the mid eighth century. This sedentarization of the Bulghār nomads was facilitated by the fact that during the mid eighth century much of the southern coastal areas and the Kerch peninsula had come under Khazar domination. The Bulghārs were thus able to settle down in many of the towns and villages of these regions.[81]

These Bulghār/Khazar sites of the second-half of the seventh to tenth centuries formed one of the seven local variants of the Saltovo-Maiatskaia or Saltovo culture. This culture existed throughout much of the khaganate and is considered to be the most important archaeological manifestation of Khazaria. As was to be expected, the Saltovo sites from the Crimea are characterized by a greater degree of Byzantine influence than that found in the non-Crimean variants due to this direct contact with the provincial Byzantine culture of the peninsula.[82] The Saltovo settlements identified in the Crimea can be divided into two chronological groups. Around 24 are dated to the period before ca. 750 while 85 date to the period from ca. 750 to the tenth century.[83] Most of the earlier settlements were in the mountains and foothills of the central Crimea, the regions where most Bulghārs began to experience sedentarization The majority of those in the latter chronological group were located in the southern and eastern coastal areas, the northwestern Crimea, and in the vicinity of Kherson. By the late eighth and early ninth century, much of the Khazarian Crimea was thus populated by a relatively prosperous agrarian population of Bulghār background.

---

[81] Baranov, *Tavrika*, pp. 3–35.
[82] Baranov, *Tavrika*, p. 5.
[83] Baranov, *Tavrika*, Figure 1, p. 8 and pp. 21, 46, 54–68.

The economy of the Khazarian Crimea was quite complex with well developed agriculture, some viticulture, significant stock raising, and considerable craft production. Agriculture was clearly the leading branch of the Saltovo economy in the Crimea. The Kerch peninsula as well as the foothills and river valleys of the southern coastal mountains provided the environment in which reliable harvests were possible. The main grain crop was wheat with rye second in importance followed by barley and millet. Yields are hard to calculate, but Baranov has made some estimates. He believes that a village with approximately 25 families could produce 85,000 kg of surplus grain. Even if taxes or tribute took at least half of this amount, the surplus grain available to the village would amount to around 40,000 kg each year. While these figures are an educated guess at best, they do suggest that the Saltovo villages of the Crimea could produce the quantities of grain needed to feed larger towns such as Kherson whose population was probably in the neighborhood of 5,000 people at this time.[84]

As would be expected in an agricultural economy, the tools used in ploughing, harvesting, and grinding the grain were found in numerous Saltovo settlements. Iron ploughshares that were attached to wooden ploughs have been unearthed at several sites. The presence among them of heavy ploughs suggests the careful and frequent working of the soil. A number of Saltovo adzes/hoes used in ploughing were also unearthed in Crimean sites. Finally, millstones, grinders, and mortars for working the grain have been uncovered at a number of sites. In addition, workshops for the production of millstones have also been unearthed. Archaeologists believe that each Saltovo family ground its own grain.[85] The evidence thus leaves no doubt that the sedentarized Bulghār population of the Crimea developed into relatively successful farmers during the Khazar era.

Viticulture has existed in the Crimea since the ancient era and it is thus not surprising that vineyards could be found among the Saltovo villages of the Crimea. At Kordon-Oba, a knife used specifically in viticulture was found amongst a hoard of iron objects inside a blacksmith's workshop. Further excavations at this settlement revealed a terraced area of around two hectares along the steep slopes of a hill on which

[84] Baranov, *Tavrika*, pp. 72–75.
[85] Baranov, *Tavrika*, p. 72.

wild grape vines were noted along with materials of the eighth and ninth centuries. Along one of the upper terraces excavators uncovered small holes around 0.5 meters deep dug about 0.5 meters from one another. These were the post holes from a Saltovo vineyard. It has been calculated that around 10,000 grape vines were growing here.[86] Viticulture was definitely a part of the Khazarian Crimean economy.

The sedentarization of the Bulghār population of the Crimea meant that animal husbandry now assumed a secondary role in their economy. Traces of animal husbandry can be seen in the remains of enclosures for herds while the relative importance of different domestic animals was reflected in the osteological materials. Enclosures were found atop mountains as well as in and around settlements. At one site, excavators unearthed the remains of a summer camp on a high plateau which was located less than two km from caves utilized as part of an enclosure for herds estimated to consist of around 110 sheep and goats along with 40 cattle. This summer camp belonged to a single Saltovo family which lived in a nearby settlement at the bottom of the mountain.[87]

The increased sedentarization in the period after ca. 750 meant that greater osteological materials appeared at a number of Saltovo sites. The best data comes from Geroevka in the Kerch peninsula and is very revealing: cows—25%; horses—9%; sheep—20%; and, pigs—46%. The true import of these figures is only evident when they are compared with comparable data from Saltovo sites along the Don such as Dmitrovskoe. At the latter site, the corresponding percentages were as follows: cows—29%; horses—24%; sheep—27%; and, pigs—20%. There were over twice as many pigs and over two times less horses in the Crimea where life was clearly more sedentary. The former nomadic pastoralists had become skilled farmers who now raised large numbers of pigs but did not need as many horses to help them keep up with their herds.[88]

Based on the archaeological and ethnographic data, Baranov has attempted to project some production figures for Saltovo animal husbandry. He believes that the average Crimean Saltovo settlement of the Tau-Kipchak type could have supplied 9,000–10,000 kg of meat each year and give 9,000 liters of cow's milk and 13,000 liters of sheep milk. If the inhabitants consumed 700–800 kg of meat annually, they would

[86] Baranov, *Tavrika*, pp. 71–72.
[87] Baranov, *Tavrika*, pp. 76–78.
[88] Baranov, *Tavrika*, pp. 78–79.

have had a surplus of about 9,000 kg of meat per year. In sum, Baranov estimates that the Saltovo settlements of the Crimea could have supplied the Byzantine markets of the Crimea with about 300,000 kg of meat annually during the period from ca. 650 to ca. 750 and with around 900,000 kg of meat each year starting in the second half of the eighth century.[89] While some of the figures may seem speculative, the conclusion is unavoidable. Even after taxes, the Saltovo agriculturalists of the Crimea had significant quantities of surplus meat that could be sold outside their communities.

Hunting and fishing also played a part in the Saltovo economy. The bones of wild animals such as deer have been found at a number of settlements. Fish hooks and weights for fish nets along with numerous fish bones have been unearthed at these same sites. Unfortunately, there is still insufficient data to make any quantitative projections about their significance in the overall economy.[90]

Craft production, both domestic and that done in specialized workshops, was well developed in the Khazarian Crimea. Spindle whorls of various types and finds of coarse wool cloth bear witness to widespread spinning and weaving using local wool. In addition, the Saltovo farmers needed a variety of tools and iron products. Thanks to an abundance of local iron ores, almost every Saltovo village had a smithy. At Kordon-Oba, a two-room workshop was found including a smithy's tools, an anvil, and half-finished products. In settlements of the period ca. 650–ca. 750, local smithies supplied the basic needs of an agrarian population with such goods as sickles, knives, arrowheads, and spearheads. The assortment of goods made by local smithies in the period after ca. 750 was much greater. Byzantine influence also grew at this time due to growing imports as well as the impact of the provincial Byzantine craft tradition.[91]

Besides ferrous metallurgy, a variety of tools and jewelry were made from copper and bronze. It is believed that copper and bronze bars were imported into the Crimea and that the goods were produced from them in the local blacksmith's workshop. Many molds into which the molten metal was poured have been found and point to the massive production of inexpensive jewelry in Saltovo workshops. Some of this jewelry was

[89] Baranov, *Tavrika*, p. 79.
[90] Baranov, *Tavrika*, p. 79.
[91] Baranov, *Tavrika*, pp. 80–81.

of high quality indicating that it was probably sold to the local provincial Byzantine population. Besides casting, the Saltovo craftsmen of the Crimea utilized stamping, engraving, gilding, granulation, and filigree to make their jewelry. Local Saltovo artisans were thus able to meet the demands of their neighbors for both necessary goods as well as some luxuries.

Pottery was one of the most developed and widespread crafts among the Saltovo population. Local potters produced large quantities and varieties of table ware, kitchen ware, and amphoras as well as other larger vessels used for carrying and storing. The earliest Saltovo kitchen pottery was primarily hand-made and several varieties were apparently brought to the Crimea by the Bulghārs. By ca. 700, however, wheel-made kitchen pottery already composed one-half of all pots and thereafter it entirely replaced hand-made kitchen pottery. Wheel-made Saltovo kitchen pottery showed strong provincial Byzantine influence. Much of the wheel made pottery was fired in two-layered vertical kilns of Byzantine origin that provided high baking temperatures. In addition, certain variants of the wheel-made kitchen pottery were apparently made by Greek artisans for the Saltovo market. Table ware, which consisted primarily of pots, was less prevalent in the Saltovo sites of the Crimea than in the Saltovo settlements of the Don and Azov regions. Locally made Saltovo pots composed only 5% of all the pottery while Byzantine oinochoes alone composed around 16%–20% of all the pottery in the Crimean sites. Evidently the workshops in the nearby Byzantine centers could produce better and cheaper table ware.

The spread of the potter's wheel and the two-layer baking kiln marked the transition of pottery from a domestic craft supplying family needs to a specialized artisans' craft meeting the demands of the market. This transition was marked by the appearance of potters' marks on the bottom of wheel-made and polished table ware. Since most of the marks have no parallels outside the Crimea, they point to the local production of most kitchen and table ware in Saltovo settlements. In fact, special pottery workshops probably existed in each Saltovo village or group of villages in the Crimea.[92]

Amphoras and other vessels used to transport and store wine and oil formed a significant percentage of the pottery found in the Saltovo

[92] Baranov, *Tavrika*, pp. 86–103.

sites of the Crimea. Amphoras alone, for example, amounted to 31% of all the pottery found at Tau-Kipchak while at Kordon-Oba they were 27%.[93] Furthermore, a great variety of amphoras were found at these sites. At Tau-Kipchak, for instance, twenty amphora shards belonging to at least eight different types were found in just two pits.[94] While some of the amphoras found in these Saltovo settlements and cemeteries were imported from abroad, especially Byzantium, or made in the Byzantine towns of the Crimea, the Khazarian regions of the Crimea produced large quantities of amphoras and related vessels. Pottery workshops where amphoras and similar vessels were produced during the eighth-tenth centuries have been at some ten sites in the Crimea.[95] Some of these sites belong to the Byzantine areas of the Crimea, e.g., Kherson. However, several major centers for the manufacture of amphoras have been unearthed in regions that were under Khazar domination. For example, at Chaban-Kule near Sudak the workshop contained at least 20 kilns of which four were excavated while at Kanakskaia balka, ten km further west, the workshop consisted of five kilns of which three had been excavated.[96] These workshops were located away from the settlements near rivers and sources of clay and were operated primarily during the summer by groups of potters. It is estimated that one such kiln could turn out up to 1000 amphoras and between 400–600 smaller vessels during the course of one season.[97] In other words, if 15 of the kilns at Chaban-Kule were in operation, around 15,000 amphoras and 6,000 to 9,000 smaller vessels could be made each year. Amphoras and other large vessels were unquestionably a major product of the Khazarian Crimea. We shall return to these amphoras when we consider the wine and oil trade of the khaganate.

The economy of the Khazarian Crimea experienced significant evolution and development over the course of several centuries. Starting from their seasonal use of steppe pasturage prior to the mid seventh century, the Bulghār nomads marooned here as the result of the Khazar conquest of the Azov-Kuban area underwent a process of sedentarization in

[93] Baranov, *Tavrika*, p. 88, Table 5.
[94] Baranov, *Tavrika*, pp. 26–33.
[95] A.L. Iakobson, *Keramika i keramicheskoe proizvodstovo srednevekovoi Tavriki* (Leningrad: 1979), p. 39.
[96] Iakobson, *Keramika*, pp. 39–51.
[97] Iakobson, *Keramika*, pp. 56–60.

order to survive. During the initial stage (ca. 650–ca. 750), they began to settle down in villages in the foothills bordering the central Crimean steppe where they gradually learned how to farm the land, raise animals in nearby pastures, and make the tools and implements they needed. Slowly, these sedentarized Bulghārs developed trade ties with the Byzantine towns such as Kherson. These towns provided good markets for the surplus grains and animals that the new agriculturalists produced and they supplied the Saltovo peoples with wine, oil, good-quality pottery, and other goods. A new period began around the mid seventh century and lasted till the tenth century. During this period, the Saltovo population moved to the towns and villages of the southern coastal region and the Kerch peninsula. Here they developed a very prosperous agriculture and animal husbandry along with viticulture. Large quantities of grain and meat were sent to the Byzantine towns as well as to the towns that came under Khazar domination. At the same time, imports grew. A reasonably prosperous agricultural population demanded more craft goods, including luxuries such as jewelry, and craft production, stimulated by Byzantine influences, expanded rapidly in the Khazarian Crimea. Home production to meet the needs of family units gave way to large-scale production for the market. This highly diversified and flourishing economy was destroyed in the tenth century although the circumstances and exact time are still a matter of discussion.

The Burṭās Land

Islamic sources agree that north of the Khazar homeland, at a distance said to have been 15 days' journey, lay the lands of the Burṭās who are said to have been a Turkic tribe.[98] The Burṭās land appears to have been located in the forest steppe which accounts for its very diverse economy. The region between the Burṭās and the Khazars was all inhabited/cultivated steppe land suggesting the presence of agriculture here.[99] One source specifically states that in the region between the Khazars country and the Volga Bulghār lands are found an "uninterrupted succession" of settlements belonging to sedentary Turkic tribes which form part of the Khazar kingdom.[100] The Burṭās were unquestionably one of

[98] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 149.
[99] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 156.
[100] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 148.

these tribes. In the steppe parts of the Burṭās land per se could be found many cultivated fields while animal husbandry also received special notice ("they have swine and oxen").[101] These fields apparently produced grains and vegetables since it is specifically noted that the Burṭās did not grow fruits.[102] It was presumably these Burṭās farmers who lived in the houses of wood mentioned by Iṣṭakhrī.[103] The pastoral sector was also significant and our sources record that some Burṭās dwell in felt tents.[104] Horse breeding must have been extensive since the Burṭās provided 10,000 horsemen to the Khazar army.[105] Our sources also note the presence of numerous camels.[106] At the same time, the Burṭās forests were very fruitful. Apiculture was well developed so that the Burṭās produced large quantities of honey as well as good wax.[107] Numerous animals were trapped in their woods. Many Burṭās apparently wore coats made of weasel pelts which seem to have been especially prevalent.[108] The pelts of black and red foxes known as *burṭāsī* were particularly well known and widely desired. It was said that one black *burṭāsī* was valued at 100 dīnārs or more while the red *burṭāsī* sold for less. Islamic rulers had a special liking for the black *burṭāsī* which they prized more than sables or martens. Apparently, a hat, caftan, or coat made of black *burṭāsī* was an important status symbol among such potentates.[109] Merchants seeking these *burṭāsī* pelts and other goods travelled from Ītil to the Burṭās land either by boat along the Volga or by land.[110]

In sum, the Burṭās land is a good example of the diversified economy found in many of the regions of Khazaria. Agriculture was highly developed and any "surplus" was no doubt sent downstream to Ītil. At the same time, honey, wax, and especially fur from the forests were in great demand while a pastoral sector also existed. The only area of the economy about which we know little is craft production. But, this question

---

[101] Marvazī, *China, the Turks*, p. 33; Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 156.
[102] Marvazī, *China, the Turks*, p. 33; Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 157.
[103] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 98.
[104] *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, pp. 162–163.
[105] Marvazī, *China, the Turks*, p. 33; Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 155.
[106] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 156.
[107] Marvazī, *China, the Turks*, p. 33; Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 155.
[108] Marvazī, *China, the Turks*, p. 33; Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 156; *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, pp. 162–163.
[109] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 149; Iṣṭakhrī (Dunlop, *History*, p. 99) also mentions "the fox-skins of Burṭās."
[110] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 156.

can be resolved once we can determine which archaeological culture should be connected with the Burṭās.

International Commerce

The Literary Sources

The written sources leave no doubt that Ītil was a major center for international commerce where merchants from the Rus' lands, the Near East, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Byzantium all gathered to exchange their goods. Many of these merchants only stopped temporarily at Ītil to conduct their business and then continued on to other destinations. During the ninth century, the Rūs, for example, passed through Ītil on their way to Jurjān and even Baghdad.[111] Similarly, the Rādānīya journeyed from Byzantium to the Khazar capital on their way to Jurjān, Balkh and Transoxiana.[112] Other merchants, however, had their headquarters in Ītil from where they took part in the commerce of the capital and conducted an extensive trade with other regions of western Eurasia. Ibn Ḥawqal, for example, has an interesting account of a merchant who lived in the western part of the capital (Khazarān) and sent his son, also an experienced merchant, to Inner Bulgharia (Danubian Bulgharia?) on business. Sometime later, the father died after having adopted one of his slaves and trained him in the business. When the birth son abroad sent back to his father asking for supplies, the adopted son kept what was sent without dispatching the requested goods. The natural son, still unaware of his father's death, again asked that the supplies be sent. The adopted son now summoned the natural son home for an accounting in order to obtain all of his adopted father's property. The conflict eventually ended up in court where the king himself had to settle the dispute.[113] While most attention is given to transient foreign merchants, especially those from Rus' and the Islamic world, this story emphasizes the great importance of native Khazar merchants living in the capital. These merchants enjoyed such status that they resided in the western part of the

[111] Ibn Khurdādhbeh quoted in Pritsak, "An Arabic Text," 257; Ibn Khurdādhbeh quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 99, n. 44.
[112] Golden, *Khazar Studies,* pp. 108–109.
[113] Ibn Ḥawqal quoted in Dunlop, *History*, pp. 215–216.

town along with the Khazar elite and, when their affairs ended up in court, the king himself became involved. The story does not indicate the religion of this family. It may well have been Jewish[114] although we can not rule out the possibility that they were Muslims.[115] The influential Khazar merchant families of the capital had far-flung business interests and their local "offices" were managed by junior members of the family. The goods handled by these merchant families were apparently stored in the capital. When supplies ran low in the local branches, the resident managers sent the payment and presumably part of their profits back to Ītil from whence new goods were dispatched to the local branches. In short, Khazar merchants based in Ītil were active participants in the international commerce of the khaganate.

Various sources document the activities of Khazar merchants throughout western Eurasia. Muslim merchants based in Khazaria and the northern Caucasus travelled to the lands of the Pechenegs and neighboring Turkic peoples in the Don-Dnepr steppe.[116] This commerce was particularly challenging since it was supposedly quite easy for merchants to get lost on the roads leading to the Pecheneg lands. Merchants heading there from Khazaria were advised to purchase horses and camels.[117] Masʿūdī mentions Muslim merchants who were apparently active on the northern frontiers of Byzantium.[118] A twelfth-century source even notes meeting with Khazar merchants in Constantinople and Alexandria.[119] Finally, the Khazars conducted a lively barter trade with the Volga Bulghārs in order to obtain sable/marten, ermine and squirrel pelts.[120] Khazar boats regularly ventured upstream from Ītil[121] and these vessels coming from the Khazar lands went as far north as Volga Bulghāria.[122] The Khazar boats sailing up the Volga from Khazaria were undoubtedly in the employ of Khazar merchants both Jewish and Muslim. Finally, we should note the merchant ships that plied the

[114] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 93, states that the western half of the town was reserved for the king, his entourage, his army, and purebred Khazars.
[115] Dunlop, *History*, pp. 217–218.
[116] Masʿūdī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, pp. 212–214.
[117] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 152.
[118] Masʿūdī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, pp. 213–214.
[119] Benjamin of Tudela cited in Dunlop, *History*, p. 230.
[120] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," pp. 157–158.
[121] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 148.
[122] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, p. 125.

Caspian[123] as well as the Khazar ships that tried to enter the harbor at Darband.[124] These reports indicate that Khazar merchants were active on the Caspian. In sum, Khazar merchants were active by land traversing the steppe and by water venturing into the interior of European Russia as well as into the Caspian. It is a serious mistake to believe that the Khazars were simply passive onlookers who did nothing but collect a tithe from foreign merchants in the capital in return for providing them with a secure place to do business. Khazar merchants played an active role in the international trade that passed through the khaganate and were busy throughout western Eurasia sometimes as local agents for family businesses centered in Ītil.

The transcontinental commerce of the khaganate revolved around three main products: the furs and slaves desired in the Islamic world and the silver dirhams that were so eagerly sought in European Russia and the Baltic. The demand for slaves and furs is probably self-explanatory. Furs provided both warmth and status to the Islamic elite. As noted above, black and red fox pelts known as *burṭāsī* were highly valued by Islamic rulers who paid as much as 100 dīnārs apiece for the black *burṭāsī*. These pelts were more desired than those of sables or martens and were used for hats, caftans, and coats.[125] Since the Burṭās lands lay due north of Khazaria and the Burṭās were Khazar tributaries, there can be no question that Khazaria occupied a key position in this part of the fur trade. There was great demand for fur throughout the Islamic world. Most of the Burṭās furs coming from Khazaria as well as those acquired by Khazar merchants in Volga Bulghāria were no doubt shipped to such Near Eastern markets as Baghdad, al-Muḥammadiyyah, etc. The many goods from Khazaria which reached the ʿAbbāsid capital, were specifically noted by one source.[126] Fur was unquestionably among this merchandise. At the same time, there was also a great demand for the furs of European Russia in Central Asia. Al-Maqdisī, for example, singles out sable, miniver, ermine, fox, marten, and beaver among the numerous furs exported to Khwārizm from Volga Bulghāria.[127] Given this desire for fur throughout the Islamic world, it is understandable why

[123] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 153.
[124] Dunlop, *History*, p. 228.
[125] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 149.
[126] Yaʿqūbī, *Les Pays*, tr. Gaston Wiet (Cairo: 1937), p. 4.
[127] al-Maqdisī quoted in W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* [E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, New Series v] 4th ed. (London: 1937), p. 235.

two major export routes existed. The earliest route led through Khazaria to the Near East while the later route went from Volga Bulghāria across the steppe to Khwārizm. These two routes will be discussed in greater detail when we come to silver dirhams.

The Khazar khaganate played a key role in the transcontinental slave trade of the Viking age. Slaves were sought as household servants, field workers, military recruits, and a variety of other purposes. While the slave trade is often thought of in terms of the export of slaves from Khazaria to the Islamic world and Byzantium, it should not be forgotten that the khaganate itself and its capital of Ītil in particular constituted large markets for slaves. If Iṣṭakhrī is to be believed, the slaves found among the Khazars were all pagans since the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religions disapproved of the enslavement of a fellow believer.[128] However, there was unquestionably a great demand for slaves among the neighbors of khaganate and the Khazars did their best to accommodate this demand. There is little evidence on the Khazar slave trade of the ninth century. Our best source for the trade of this period does not mention slaves among the goods that Rus' merchants brought to Khazaria.[129] In the tenth century, Rūs merchants supplied large numbers of slaves to the Volga Bulghār markets on the middle Volga.[130] It appears that most of these slaves were destined for the markets of Central Asia.[131] Most of the slaves exported to the Islamic world via the khaganate were apparently gathered in the southern parts of European Russia where the capture of prisoners destined for slave markets was widespread. The Khazars raided the Pecheneg lands each year in search of booty and slaves and they also invaded the Ghuzz and Burṭās lands less frequently for their same purpose.[132] One report even states that the "Khazar slaves brought to the Islamic lands are mostly from" the country of the Khazarian Pechenegs.[133] The Hungarians also furnished the Khazars with Saqlāb slaves who had been captured in war and then

[128] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 96.

[129] Ibn Khurdādhbeh (ca. 850–875) quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 99, fn. 44, states that the Rus' transported beaver-skins, black fox-skins and swords to the Byzantine lands on the Black Sea and to the capital of the Khazars.

[130] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, pp. 130–133.

[131] al-Maqdisī quoted in Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 235, lists Ṣaqāliba slaves among the goods exported to Khwārizm from Volga Bulghāria.

[132] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 154. Also see Marvazī, *China, the Turks*, pp. 32–33.

[133] *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, p. 160.

transported to the port of Kerch.[134] While our source (Ibn Rusta) states that Kerch was a port in Byzantine territory, it had long been ruled by the Khazars and was included by Khagan Joseph among the Crimean towns still paying tribute to the Khazars ca. 950.[135] While Ītil was the main Khazar center for the slave trade going via the Caspian and Caucasus, Kerch was apparently the chief port for the Khazar slave trade in the Black Sea. At the same time, the Khazars were endangered by other peoples seeking potential slaves. The Pechenegs, for example, raided the lands of their neighbors and sold their captives as slaves.[136] In general, one gets the distinct impression that every people in this part of western Eurasia raided its neighbors in search of slaves.

The Numismatic Evidence

While the written sources reveal a great deal about the transnational trade of the khaganate, they do not provide evidence for its origin, evolution, and decline. The thousands of Islamic silver coins or dirhams deposited throughout western Eurasia constitute our best source for the analysis of these key issues. Since these hoards can be dated by their most recent dirham, we know approximately when they were buried. Despite the fact that silver coins had been struck by Islamic rulers since the earliest days of the Umayyad caliphate, almost none of these coins reached Khazaria at that time. The long hundred-years' war between Khazaria and the Umayyads (ca. 650–ca. 750) made any significant commerce between the two states very difficult if not impossible. The situation changed, however, with the emergence of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. The caliphs in Baghdad had too many problems in too many parts of their vast empire to pursue the war with the Khazars. Consequently, starting in the 760s, the caliphs sought a rapprochement with the khagan, a strategy that slowly but surely succeeded despite some initial difficulties. Therefore, it was only during the last quarter of the eighth century that significant trade between the caliphate and the khaganate became possible. It is thus no surprise that the first hoards of Islamic dirhams only

---

[134] Ibn Rusteh (Rusta), *Les Atours Précieux*, tr. Gaston Wiet (Cairo: 1955), p. 160. Also see Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 154, and Marvazī, *China, the Turks*, p. 35. The latter includes Rūs among the slaves sold to the Byzantines.

[135] "The Reply of Khagan Joseph," (Extended Redaction), p. 102.

[136] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 152.

appeared in the Caucasus, European Russia, and the Baltic at this time. Islamic commerce with Khazaria and the north thus dates to the period from ca. 775 to ca. 800.[137]

The great Islamic commerce with European Russia and the Baltic that began ca. 775 continued until ca. 1025 and underwent numerous changes. For our purposes here, it is pertinent to note that during the first phase of this trade, ca. 775–ca. 900, Khazaria functioned as the key intermediary between the Islamic world and European Russia. The chief routes for this commerce ran from Iran and Iraq via the Caspian and Caucasus through the khaganate and then proceeded into the interior of European Russia mainly by the Don-Donets basin. However, during most of the tenth century, Khazaria assumed a secondary position as the main route for the export of dirhams to the north ran from Khwārizm to Volga Bulghāria and from there went by the upper Volga and other north Russian rivers to various parts of European Russia.[138] In other words, the great Viking-age trade between the Islamic world and northern Europe can be divided into two distinct periods and Khazaria played a very different role in each. Contrary to what our written sources suggest, this commerce experienced great fluctuations over the course of time and was hardly static.

There are no literary sources indicating the changes in the volume of Viking-age trade with the Islamic world over the course of some two and one-half centuries, i.e., from ca. 775 to ca. 1025. However, an approximate date for the burial of a dirham hoard can be obtained from the hoard's most recent dirham. It is thus possible to determine how many dirhams were in the hoards deposited during any time period. The number of dirhams deposited in European Russia and the Baltic during any given period is not necessarily a function of the number of new dirhams imported from the Islamic world during that period. Some dirhams remained in circulation for a century or more while others were

---

[137] See Thomas S. Noonan, "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia: The Role of Arab-Khazar Relations in the Development of the Earliest Islamic Trade with Eastern Europe," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 4(1984), pp. 151–282, reprinted in Thomas S. Noonan, *The Islamic World, Russia and the Vikings, 750–900: The Numismatic Evidence* [Variorum Collected Studies] (Aldershot: 1998).

[138] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 149, specifically mentions that "caravans constantly go from them [the Volga Bulghārs] to Khwārizm…and from Khwārizm to them…" Al-Maqdisī, quoted in Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 235, enumerates a vast array of goods reaching Khwārizm from Volga Bulghāria.

deposited very soon after being struck. Nevertheless, the number of dirhams deposited during a given period does depend in large part upon the quantity of imports during that period. The number of dirhams that were buried increased when growing imports made more dirhams available and declined when imports decreased. The number of dirhams in the hoards deposited at any given time is not a perfect indicator of the volume of dirham imports. But, given the absence of written sources containing precise data, it is the best indicator we have. A comparatively large number of dirhams being deposited reflects a growing trade while a declining number points to a decrease in the volume of dirham imports.

Around 22% of the dirhams deposited in European Russia come from hoards deposited in the eighth and ninth centuries while 78% originate from hoards buried in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.[139] Since almost all the dirhams deposited in the Baltic lands came via European Russia, these coins must also be considered. The comparable figures from the Baltic are 16% for the eighth and ninth centuries and 84% for the tenth and early eleventh centuries.[140] In other words, around 20% of the dirhams imported into northern Europe were deposited at the time (ca. 775–ca. 900) when Khazaria was the key intermediary in the commerce between the Islamic world and the north while some 80% were deposited in the tenth and eleventh centuries when Volga Bulghāria was the primary intermediary and Khazaria only played a secondary role. The Volga Bulghār trade, if we may use this term, was four times greater than the Khazar trade. It is crucial to keep this fact in mind. While the written sources do not ignore the Bulghār trade, they fail to bring out the fact that the tenth-century Bulghār trade was so much greater than the ninth-century Khazar trade.

Khazaria's role in the tenth-century trade was, in fact, rather insignificant. In a study which I am now preparing, I calculated the percentage of Sāmānid/Central Asian and ʿAbbāsid/Near Eastern dirhams in various hoards from European Russia and Sweden deposited between ca. 925–ca. 950 and ca. 936–ca. 945 respectively.[141] In the hoards from

[139] Thomas S. Noonan, "Fluctuations in Islamic Trade with Eastern Europe during the Viking Age," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 16(1992), p. 247.

[140] Thomas S. Noonan, "The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce," in Björn Ambrosiani and Helen Clarke, eds., *Developments Around the Baltic and the North Sea in the Viking Age* [Birka Studies, 3] (Stockholm: 1994), p. 227.

[141] Unfortunately, Thomas Noonan was unable to finish this study prior to his passing

European Russia, the Sāmānid/Central Asian dirhams which were exported north via Volga Bulghāria constituted between 75%–100% of the coins in the typical hoard. By way of contrast, ʿAbbāsid/Near Eastern dirhams being exported north via Khazaria amounted to less than five percent of the normal hoard and were not present in a number of the hoards. Similarly, in the Swedish hoards, Sāmānid/Central Asian dirhams formed 80%–90% of the dirham in an average hoard while the ʿAbbāsid/Near Eastern dirhams only comprised 5%-10% of the coins. While the export of dirhams from the Near East to northern Europe via the khaganate continued during the tenth century, it only amounted to about one-tenth of the total Islamic trade with northern Europe. Furthermore, many dirhams were sent north from the Near East *after* the collapse of the khaganate.[142] During the period up to 965, the true Khazar share was thus around five percent of the total trade. Ninety percent of this trade, on average, originated in Central Asia and reached northern Europe via Volga Bulghāria.

Some years ago, in a study that some found controversial, I estimated that around 50,000,000 to 100,000,000 whole dirhams were exported to the Baltic from European Russia.[143] About the same number of dirhams were probably deposited in European Russia. In other words, the trade of northern Europe with the Islamic world resulted in the export of some 100,000,000 to 200,000,000 whole dirhams into European Russia and the Baltic. Some 20% or 20,000,000 to 40,000,000 of these dirhams can be attributed to the ninth-century Khazar trade while 80% or 80,000,000 to 160,000,000 of these dirhams can be associated with the tenth-century Bulghār commerce. Some 90% of the tenth-century imports can be connected with the Sāmānid/Central Asian trade going through Volga Bulghāria while around 10% came as part of the Khazar/

---

in 2001. Roman Kovalev will attempt to locate the data for this study in the Noonan archive (which is in his possession) and complete the article under the title: Thomas S. Noonan, Roman K. Kovalev, "Coins for the Khagan: The Role of Khazaria in the Great Viking-Age Trade Between the Islamic World and European Russia" (forthcoming).

[142] The import of Near Eastern dirhams into northern Europe after 965 is discussed in Thomas S. Noonan, "A Dirham Hoard of the Early Eleventh Century from Northern Estonia and Its Importance for the Routes by which Dirhams Reached Eastern Europe ca. 1000 AD," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 14(1983), pp. 198–200.

[143] Thomas S. Noonan, "Dirham Exports to the Baltic in the Viking Age," in *Sigtuna Papers: Proceedings of the Sigtuna Symposium on Viking-Age Coinage 1–4 June 1989*, ed. Kenneth Jonsson and Brita Malmer [Commentationes de Nummis Saeculorum IX–XI in Suecia Repertis. Nova Series 6] (Stockholm-London: 1990), pp. 255–256.

Near Eastern commerce. This 10% amounted to 8,000,000 to 16,000,000 whole dirhams of which 4,000,000 to 8,000,000 can be attributed to the period 900–965. In other words, during the ninth century, 20,000,000 to 40,000,000 whole dirhams passed through Khazaria as part of the Islamic trade with northern Europe while the figures for the tenth century were 4,000,000 to 8,000,000. Tenth-century dirham imports through Khazaria were only about one-fifth of what they had been in the ninth century but they were still substantial. Nevertheless, the khagan's revenues had declined sharply. The 2,000,000 to 4,000,000 whole dirhams he obtained during the ninth century from his tithe on goods passing through the khaganate dropped to 400,000 to 800,000 during the tenth century. While the above calculations are unquestionably speculative and further refinements are necessary, they do provide, for the first time, a fairly concrete idea of what the change from the Khazar route to the Volga Bulghār route meant for the khaganate.

The decline of four-fifths in the volume of the Islamic trade passing through Khazaria unquestionably had a major impact upon the economy of the khaganate. In particular, the great reorientation in the Islamic commerce ca. 900 dramatically altered the relationship between the Khazars and the Volga Bulghārs. Written sources do not tell us when the Khazars extended their domination over the Volga Bulghārs, but it is clear that by 922 Khazar authority over the Volga Bulghārs was firmly established. In that year, the Bulghār ruler made frequent complaints to Ibn Faḍlān regarding the Khazars "who have enslaved me."[144] It thus seems probable that the expansion of Khazar power northward to the Bulghār lands of the middle Volga was inspired, in large part, by the great shift in the trade route leading north from the Islamic world, a shift which placed the Bulghārs at the center of the highly profitable trade of Central Asia with northern Russia. The Khazars apparently attempted to compensate for the precipitous decline in their revenues from the Islamic trade by taking a share of the growing wealth being amassed from this commerce by the Volga Bulghārs.

Despite the numerous complaints of the Bulghār ruler about Khazar "enslavement," the written sources suggest that the Khazar yoke was much less severe than we might believe. On the one hand, the Bulghār ruler paid the khagan a tribute of one sable skin per household.[145] This

[144] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, pp. 90, 92.
[145] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, p. 125.

no doubt amounted to a very substantial quantity of fur. Gardīzī's figure of 500,000 Bulghār households[146] is no doubt an exaggeration. But, even if the correct figure were only one-tenth of that, 50,000 sable pelts were worth around 100,000–125,000 dirhams at the prevailing price in Volga Bulghāria.[147] The khagan unquestionably realized a good income from his Bulghār tribute. On the other hand, the Bulghār ruler collected the very same tribute of one sable per household from his people.[148] The Khazar overlords did not receive more tribute than their Bulghār vassals. Furthermore, the Bulghār ruler collected a tithe from the ships of both Khazar and Rūs merchants who came to his market.[149] Khazar merchants were thus treated on a par with the Rūs merchants and received no special preference. Finally, there is no indication that the khagan received a share of the huge profits made by the Bulghārs from their trade with Central Asian merchants. The khagan obtained a nice tribute in fur which had great political symbolism and real economic value but that was all. A tribute worth at least 100,000 dirhams per year hardly compensated for the fact that as a result of the shift in the main trade route from the Islamic world, some 72,000,000 to 144,000,000 whole dirhams were now exported to northern Europe through the Volga Bulghār lands. If the imports amounted to around 100,000,000 coins then the Bulghār ruler's tithe would equal about 10,000,000 dirhams, a sum equal to one hundred years of the Bulghār tribute to the khagan. The political power of the khaganate was slowly but surely eroded during the course of the tenth century by the tremendous loss of income that arose from the diversion of the Islamic trade from the Caspian-Caucasus route through Khazaria to the Central Asian route that led through Volga Bulghāria.

In her recent study of the Saltovo culture, S.A. Pletneva noted that the chronological boundaries of the Saltovo culture coincided with the period of the flourishing of the khaganate, i.e., from the late eighth century until the early tenth century.[150] What Pletneva did not ask is

[146] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 157.

[147] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," pp. 158–159, says that the Volga Bulghārs paid two and one half dirhams for an ermine pelt.

[148] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, p. 104.

[149] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, p. 125; Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 158, simply states that the Bulghār ruler takes a tenth of the goods from merchant ships that come to his market.

[150] S.A. Pletneva, *Ocherki khazarskoi arkheologii* (Moscow-Jerusalem: 1999), p. 3.

why the khaganate reached its zenith at this time. It is not a mere coincidence that the khaganate and the Saltovo culture prospered during the very time when the main trade route connecting the Islamic world with northern Europe led through Khazaria. The economy of the khaganate experienced a long period of growth precisely because Khazaria dominated the Islamic trade with the north and derived great revenues from it. The wealth coming from this commerce allowed the khaganate to hire large numbers of Islamic mercenaries from Khwārizm (the al-Lārisiya).[151] With this additional force, the Khazars were able to impose their control over many neighboring peoples and force them to pay tribute as well as furnish troops.[152] The revenues coming from the Islamic trade with northern Europe thus formed the foundation for the expansion of Khazar power into such areas as the middle Volga, the Oka basin, and the middle Dnepr. The reports, discussed above, of the numerous dependent peoples in the khaganate reflect this period of growing political power based on the revenues from the Islamic trade.

Even before the shift to the Central Asian route, problems had begun to develop in the Islamic trade of Khazaria. During the period from ca. 850 to ca. 875, the Islamic trade with the north boomed and numerous new Near Eastern dirhams were deposited in northern Europe soon after their striking. However, very few new dirhams struck in the Near East between ca. 875 and ca. 900 reached European Russia and the Baltic during this time.[153] The volume of trade as measured by the import of new dirhams dropped precipitously. The Near Eastern mints were still supplying large numbers of dirhams at this time, the great demand for these coins still existed in northern Europe, and the khagan would still profit from the export of dirhams to the north. The most likely explanation is that there was some disruption in the trade routes leading through the khaganate. The Pechenegs, Magyars and/or some other group now made it impossible for Rūs and Islamic merchants to meet and exchange their goods as they had done for the past century. It was apparently in response to this crisis that the new route from the Sāmānid lands in

[151] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, pp. 146–147.

[152] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 155, notes, for example, that the Burṭās furnished the Khazars with ten thousand mounted warriors. The East Slavs of the middle Dnepr as well as the Volga Bulghārs paid tribute to the khaganate.

[153] Thomas S. Noonan, "The first major silver crisis in Russia and the Baltic, c. 875–c. 900," *hikuin*, 11(1985), pp. 41–50.

Central Asia through Volga Bulghāria was developed. Or, to put it more correctly, the old caravan route across the steppes from Central Asia to the middle Volga experienced a renaissance due to the difficulties in the Caspian-Caucasus route. In short, the khaganate already began to experience a loss of revenue in connection with the Islamic trade starting around ca. 875 and this process became even more pronounced beginning around ca. 900 when the new Central Asian route circumventing the Khazar homeland began to function.

It is no wonder that starting in the late ninth century Khazaria had to contend with a continuing series of wars and revolts inspired by its enemies. According to the *Schechter Text/Cambridge Document*, the Khagan Benjamin (ca. 880–900) had to wage war against a coalition of five peoples whose members, according to Pritsak, consisted of Byzantium, the Pechenegs, the Black Bulgars, the Torks/Ghuzz, and the Burṭās. Khazaria triumphed against this coalition thanks to the assistance of the Alans.[154] During the reign of Khagan Aaron (ca. 900–920), alliances shifted and the Alans, inspired by Byzantium, fought with the Khazars who now employed Tork mercenaries to help them defeat the Alans. Finally, during the reign of Khagan Joseph (ca. 920–960), Byzantium bribed the Rus' to attack the Khazar town of Tamartakha (ca. 925). The Rus' were repulsed and forced by the Khazars to raid Byzantine territories in the Crimea.[155] It is thus quite evident that Byzantium sensed problems in Khazaria starting in the late ninth century and launched a series of wars against the khaganate. We can also conclude that these problems stemmed, in large part, from the disruption of the old Near Eastern trade route and the emergence of the new Central Asian route. Byzantium was very quick to exploit the significant loss of revenue produced by these changes and their negative impact on the Khazar economy.

Inter-Regional Commerce

Most accounts of the commerce of the khaganate focus upon its foreign trade. It is sometimes forgotten that there was a very active commerce

---

[154] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 157, states that the Alan king could raise 30,000 horsemen.

[155] Norman Golb and Omeljan Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century* (Ithaca-London: 1982), pp. 132–142. I have followed Pritsak's interpretation of the text.

within Khazaria as well. The existence of merchant firms in Ītil which had branches in different parts of southeastern Europe has already been noted. There was also a very active trade along the Volga between Ītil and Volga Bulghāria.[156] Merchants regularly travelled between the Burṭās land and Ītil both by boat and land.[157] Other Khazar merchants went further north along the Volga as far as Volga Bulghāria. This Khazar-Bulghār commerce was quite extensive and based on barter. While the Khazars acquired furs, wax and honey in the Bulghār lands,[158] it is not clear what they exchanged in return for them.[159] In fact, when ships from the Khazar lands arrived in Volga Bulghāria, the amīr collected a tithe "of the entire merchandise."[160] The lower and middle Volga were thus the center of a very lively internal commerce within Khazaria.

The most revealing evidence on domestic trade is probably provided by the finds of large vessels such as amphoras and large pitchers used to transport and store a variety of products. Amphora shards are found in most Saltovo towns and many villages. While most of these finds have not been fully published and much remains to be done in the study of early medieval amphoras, it is clear that the various types and shapes of amphoras fall into two broad categories, imported and domestic. Imported amphoras came primarily from Constantinople and areas of the Black Sea other than the northern coasts. These amphoras were primarily used to transport oil and wine to the Crimea and Khazaria. However, as we have seen, large quantities of amphoras were produced in both the Byzantine and Khazarian regions of the Crimea. Shards of the two main types of amphoras made in the Khazarian regions of the Crimea have been found throughout the Crimea as well as along the lower Don including Sarkel, along the Northern Donets as far as Saltovo, and in the Azov region at such sites as Tamatarkha.[161] In short, the Saltovo potters of the Crimea produced many of the amphora in which wine from the Saltovo vineyards of the Crimea was shipped to other parts of the khaganate. Amphoras may well have been produced elsewhere in the khaganate. At Tamatarkha, for example, Pletneva divided the amphora finds of the eighth and ninth centuries into four groups based on the

[156] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, p. 148.
[157] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," p. 156.
[158] Iṣṭakhrī quoted in Dunlop, *History*, p. 93.
[159] Gardīzī, "Two Chapters," pp. 157–158.
[160] Ibn Faḍlān, *Risālah*, p. 125.
[161] Iakobson, *Keramika*, 30–32.

characteristics of the clay. One type was unquestionably imported from elsewhere. However, those shards belonging to another type widespread in southeastern Europe during the eighth and ninth centuries were considered to be locally made as were the shards belonging to a third type. But, as Pletneva added, it was impossible to prove this scientifically at the time she was writing.[162]

It is difficult to estimate the volume of this internal wine and oil trade. One reason for this is that the exact figures on amphora finds from such sites as Sarkel in the lower Don are difficult to uncover. There is no doubt that a relatively large number of such shards were found at Sarkel in strata dated from the second half of the ninth to the first half of the tenth century. As in other sites, it appears that these amphoras included both those imported from outside the khaganate and those made within its borders.[163] More recently, a chart published by Flerova suggests that over 2100 amphora shards were found in the Khazar strata of Sarkel during the excavations of 1949–1951.[164] Finally, Pletneva has published an interesting map which shows the relative quantities of amphora shards (under 10% of all pottery, under 50%, etc.) found at various Saltovo sites.[165] There is no doubt that amphoras constituted a significant percentage of the pottery found at numerous sites. It is hoped that future research will distinguish the types made inside and outside the khaganate and give us more precise figures on the number of shards from each site. When such data appears, it should be possible to analyze the wine and oil trade of Khazaria in much greater detail. In conclusion, wine was a very interesting item in the Khazar economy. Some wine was imported from abroad. Other wine came from the nearby vineyards in the Byzantine parts of the Crimea. But, some of the wine produced in the Khazarian Crimea and elsewhere in the khaganate was consumed locally as well as being exported to other parts of Khazaria. The wine trade of the khaganate thus accommodated a variety of tastes and a variety of pocketbooks.

Large red-clay pitchers normally having one handle were widely employed throughout Khazaria in place of amphoras. In fact, they

---

[162] S.A. Pletneva, "Srednevekovaia keramika Tamanskogo gorodishcha," in *Keramika i steklo drevnei Tmutarakani* (Moscow: 1963), pp. 50–53.

[163] S.A. Pletneva, "Keramika Sarkela-Beloi Vezhi," in *Trudy Volga-Donskoi arkheologicheskoi ekspeditsii*, ed. M.I. Artamonov [Materialy i issledovaniia po arkheologii SSSR, No. 75] (Moscow-Leningrad: 1959), pp. 241–271.

[164] V.E. Flerova, *Graffiti khazarii* (Moscow: 1997), p. 171, Table 4.

[165] S.A. Pletneva, *Sarkel i "Shelkovyi" Put'* (Voronezh: 1996), p. 152, figure 55.

probably evolved from amphoras in several stages while losing one handle. These pitchers began to appear in the stratum of Tamatarkha dating to the eighth century and became extremely widespread in the ninth century replacing amphoras not only within the town but also for transport elsewhere. The quantity of finds at this site is so great that it is believed that one of the centers for their production was located here or in a neighboring village. This opinion is reinforced by the fact that the overwhelming majority of red-clay pitchers found at Tamatarkha in the strata of the eighth and ninth century were made from the same clay. Only a few shards from one part of the town were made from a different type of clay and apparently belonged to imported pitchers.[166] More recently, Baranov has concluded that the high-throated pitchers found in several Saltovo sites in the Crimea as well as among the remains of Byzantine ships that sank along the Crimean coast were made in the Taman' peninsula from whence they were sent to the Crimea, the Azov region, and the Don area.[167]

There was thus a significant volume of internal trade within the khaganate that encompassed forest products such as fur and honey, agricultural/food products such as grains, meat, and wine, and manufactured products such as metal jewelry, amphoras and large pitchers.

Conclusion

The prosperity and political viability of the Khazar khaganate were based on the existence of both a lucrative international trade and a well developed domestic commerce. A highly diversified internal economy with a developed agriculture, extensive animal husbandry, and dynamic craft production was supplemented by widespread hunting and fishing. In many ways, Khazaria survived for so long because it was largely self-sufficient and not dependent upon essential imports from abroad. Along with this balanced internal economy, Khazaria derived considerable income from its key role in the trade between the Islamic world and northern Europe. In the period from ca. 775 to ca. 900, the khaganate became large, powerful, and rich due, in large part, to the profits of

[166] Pletneva, "Srednevekovaia keramika," pp. 52–54.
[167] Baranov, *Tavrika*, p. 23. Iakobson, *Keramika*, p. 33, has suggested that pitchers may even have been made in Sarkel.

this trade. However, the shift of the main trade route from the Islamic world to European Russia via Volga Bulghāria ca. 900 caused a sharp drop in Khazaria's income which threatened its political power. Hostile neighbors like Byzantium sensed this weakness and began a determined campaign to destroy the khaganate and annex much of its territory. The highly diversified internal economy could not compensate for the loss of so much revenue derived from foreign commerce.

KHAZARIA AND RUS':
AN EXAMINATION OF THEIR HISTORICAL RELATIONS

Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin

An impartial evaluation of the relations between Khazaria and Rus' (or Eastern Slavs) within the limits imposed by official Soviet historiography was rather uncommon: the role of Khazaria was mainly pictured as an obstacle in the highly progressive processes of the development of the Russian state. In present-day studies (and not only in the recurrences of the old "Eurasianist" theories) the role of Khazaria is often presented as almost determining these processes: going as far as the supposition that the calling-in of the Varangian princes to Novgorod by the Slavs, the Chud' and the Merja (862 acording to the Primary chronicle—*Povest' vremennych let*, PVL) was provoked by the threat of Khazar hegemony in Eastern Europe (cf. Novosel'tsev 1991, p. 6).

On the contrary, the sources give evidence for another process: as early as the 9th century, the early Rus' were forcing their way into the international markets through the river routes controlled by Khazaria. Archaeology, and above all numismatics, together with the Arab sources help us realize a certain community of interests that made the Varangians, the Slavs, the Merja and the Chud' unite. From the period between the 8th–9th centuries, Arabic silver was imported to Eastern and Northern Europe via Khazaria (cf. Noonan 1983), and the onset of this import can be dated from the 860s—the date given in the chronicle for the calling-in of the Varangians (cf. Potin 1970; Noonan 1994, p. 226 ff.). Sometimes, the hoards of the 9th century Arabic coins in the North of Eastern Europe are interpreted as tribute given to the Varangians, but it is much more likely that they represent evidence of the distribution of profits; the local upper strata had exercised their right to a part of the treasures and buried it as hoards in their settlements.

The princes of this multi-tribal union with a certain cause (because the union actually included a number of peoples—"tribes") were claiming the "imperial" title of khagan. Besides the Arab sources, these claims were recorded S.A. 839 in the *Annales Bertiniani*: a Byzantine embassy to the Carolingian emperor came with "certain men who said that they, that is, their people were called *Rhos*, their king was known as the

Chaganus". This is at the same time the earliest mention of the Rus'. The embassy of the Rus' arrived in Constantinople "for the sake of friendship" and asked for permission to return home through the territory of the Carolingian empire. The emperor Louis the Pious, who was accustomed to repelling Viking attacks, suspected that they were spies as they turned out to belong to the "gens of the *Sueones*" (cf. Nazarenko 1999, pp. 288–290). Their fate as well as the destination of their return journey are unknown: whether they wanted to go back to Birka or Ladoga, because neither Novgorod nor Kiev of that time are fixed in the data of the written sources or archaeology.

From this viewpoint, the latest attempts to find the "Rus khaganate" in the Dnieper or Volkhov basin do not seem to be promising (cf. Sedov 1999, Zuckerman 2000) as they are based on a strained interpretation of the sources. The reports of Arab geographers about a mysterious island or peninsula of *ar-Rûs* ruled by a khagan actually date from the 9th century, but we do not know either its location or whether it actually did exist or was merely a reflection of certain literary legends, either of Biblical origin, about the "Islands of peoples" or ancient graeco-roman traditions about Thule. The new attempts to associate this island with Novgorod and neighbouring Gorodishche ("Old town") are based on a direct identification of the toponym's meaning in alien languages: the Scandinavian name of Novgorod—*Hólmgarðr* ("Island town"—Franklin, Shepard 1996, p. 27 f.) and the vocabulary of Arab geographic literature (cf. Konovalova 2000, pp. 400 ff.). One should remember in this connection that even Alexey A. Shakhmatov tried to find this island near Staraja Russa: according to the late medieval sources there existed a locality named Ostrov ("Island"). This hypothesis, though antiquated from the point of view of modern historiography, was popular since the late Middle Ages (cf. the 16th century Voskresenskaja chronicle) and implied that Staraya Russa was the centre of the early Rus' and Novgorod—New town—was the centre of the Varangians.

Judging from the text of the Novgorod I Chronicle, Shakhmatov thought that the Varangians Askold and Dyr had settled in Kiev before the Varangian princes were called into Novgorod. Anatolij P. Novosel'tsev in one of his last works (1991) developed this hypothesis and was even ready to attribute to Askold and Dyr the embassy of 839 and the foundation of the "Rus khaganate" in the Middle Dnieper region. Shakhmatov based his constructions rather on the new (for his day) archaeological conception of the Norman colonization of Eastern Europe in the 9th–10th centuries than on the textological data. Nowadays, it is evident that

in the 9th century the Scandinavians penetrated only into the North of Eastern Europe—into Ladoga, Novgorod and the Upper Volga. No reliable 9th century Scandinavian complexes were discovered either in the Upper or in the Middle Dnieper region—all of them should be dated from the 10th century. We have practically no traces of the retinue of Askold and Dyr, though according to the written sources it came in 860 via the route "from the Varangians to the Greeks" and settled in Kiev (cf. Petrukhin 1995, pp. 85 ff.). Equally, we have no grounds to associate with Kiev the data about the Rus' from the *Annales Bertiniani*—judging from the finds of coins. Generally, the Dnieper route was not functioning until the late 9th century and the Arabic silver traveled through the Don and the Oka to the Upper Volga and then to the Baltic (Noonan 1992).

Valentin V. Sedov's latest hypothesis (1999) which develops the traditions of Soviet historiography is marked by even greater misinterpretations of the sources: he seeks a powerful state of the early Slavonian Rus' in the Middle Dnieper region and now associates it not with the Slavonic "antiquities of the Anti" on the right-bank Dnieper but with the left-bank Dnieper area of the so-called Volyntsevskaja culture. According to this hypothesis in the 830s the Khazar khaganate had to build Sarkel and other fortresses on the Don against the Rus' who had actually formed this culture.[1] In many aspects this construction follows Mikhail I. Artamonov's hypothesis which, as far as we can imagine it nowadays,

[1] As Constantine Porphyrogenitus mentions (DAI, pp. 170–175), the fortress Sarkel was built by the Byzantines under the emperor Theophilus at the request of the khagan and bek. Obviously, this fact has stimulated scholars to search for a Russian threat to Khazaria. The logic of such suggestions seems dubious: though the people "rhos" were actually mentioned for the first time in connection with their embassy to Theophilus, this embassy can hardly be perceived as the main enemy of the Khazars—for the good reason that Khazaria, at that time, was a Byzantine ally. The information about the raids of the Rus' against Amastris and Surozsh (Khazarian-Byzantine Sugdea) which are placed before 842 (the end of Theophilus' reign) goes back to hagiographical sources, but according to the later "Life of Stephen of Sudgea", Rus' was based in Novgorod and not in the Middle Dnieper region. In this connection the traditional supposition seems better grounded: Constantine Porphyrogenitus reports about another serious problem in the Khazarian steppe of the 9th century—the aggravated relations between the Khazars and the Magyars. Probably, the system of fortresses on the Don was to defend the khagan's domain from the rebellious nomads and control the river and steppe routes—the branches of the "Silk road" (cf. Golden 1980, pp. 67 ff.; Pletneva 1986, pp. 50 ff.; 1996, pp. 142 ff.). Obviously, the Magyars were the people who blocked the return road for the embassy of Rus' to Theophilus in 839.

It is chronologically difficult to connect the construction of the Khazarian fortresses with the Volyntsevskaja culture: in the first quarter of the 9th century in the left-bank Dnieper; it was replaced by the so-called Romenskaja culture (cf. Sukhobokov, Jurenko 1993).

was formed under the direct pressure of official Soviet historiography and correspondingly was characterized by certain inherent contradictions (cf. Artamonov 1962, pp. 304 ff.; 365 ff.; Artamonov 1990). Actually, Artamonov thought that "as…the Slavs took possession of the Middle Dnieper region by the consent and with the assistance of the Khazars, when they settled there they became tributaries of the Khazar khaganate" (Artamonov 1990, p. 277). Here V.O. Kljuchevskij's words (1987, pp. 139–140) should be recalled about the Khazar "yoke" which, as he thought, was not extremely hard and even helped the prosperity of the economy because the river routes to the Black Sea and Caspian markets were free for the loyal tributaries of the Khazars.

In fact, most likely these river routes had been blocked—in the Middle Dnieper region there are practically no coin hoards from the 9th century, though the Khazar period in the Middle Dnieper region and even in the region between the Dnieper and the Don is marked by an intensive agricultural colonization, both Slavonic and Alanian. Even migrants from the right-bank Dnieper, the bearers of the Lucka Rajkovetskaja culture (Vinnikov 1998) settled on the Don. It is clear why the Khazars patronized the colonization of the forest-steppe zone: the nomads needed corn. This fact provides ample ground for the supposition that the data of the Arab sources on the twenty thousand (!) families of aṣ-Ṣaqâliba (in Arab tradition this is the term for the Slavs) and other infidels captured by the Arab commander Marwân b. Muḥammad in 737 during his raid into Khazaria really concern the agricultural colonists from the Don (cf. Shakhmatov 1919, pp. 34–37; Novoseľtsev 1990, pp. 202–203; cf. also in this book the article by Tatiana Kalinina).

The system of fortresses on the Don and in the basin of the Severskij Donets evidently helped to control these important regions, including the *Vjatichi* on the Don (the bearers of the so-called Borshevo culture) and Oka, as well as the *Severjane* on the left-bank Dnieper (significantly, their name is connected with the river-name *Seveskij Donets*; cf. Vinnikov, Pletneva 1998, pp. 38–39). And it is no less clear why the Slavic tributaries of the Khazars were interested in an alliance with the gangs of the Rus': they also were forcing their way into the international markets.

Artamonov thought that in the early 9th century when the Khazar khaganate was engaged in an internecine war—the uprising of the Kavars and the Magyars, in the Middle Dnieper region its rival—"the Khaganate of the Rhos" came into existance (Artamonov 1990, p. 286 ff.). Here the problem of the Dnieper Slavs tribute to the Khazars which

was abolished, according to the chronicle, in the late 9th century by the Russian prince Oleg is tactfully avoided, as well as the chronicle concept of the Varangian origin of the Rus'. In this connection Artamonov's concepts of the *Rhos* in the Middle Dnieper region were based on the "commonplace" of the historiography of that time about the autochthonous *Rus'*. Lately, a lot of works it have been published demonstrating that the names with the stem Rhos- (Rhosomoni, etc.) bore no relation to the name Rus' (cf. the list in: Melnikova, Petrukhin 1991). Taking that into account, Sedov based his concept of the Slavonic origin of the Rus' on a gloss—an insertion into the work by the Persian geographer Ibn Khurdadbech, dated from 840–880. It states that the merchants called ar-Rûs are "a sort of Slavs" (*aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*); they move from the distant Slavic lands to the Rûm (Black) Sea, where the ruler of Rûm (the Byzantine emperor) levies a tithe on them; another route leads them by the river of Slavs to Baghdad via Khazaria, and ar-Rûs pay a tithe to the ruler of the Khazars (Kalinina 1986, p. 71; cf. Konovalova 2000). This is the only case in the Arab geographic literature where the Rus' are identified with the Slavs, but in the reports about the "khaganate of the Rus'" (to be more correct—about the khagan of the Rus') used by Sedov, the Rus' were actually opposing the Slavs: attacking them on their ships, selling them as slaves, etc. (cf. Ibn Rusta's data: Novosel'tsev 1965, pp. 397 ff.). The most ancient evidence of the origin of the Rus' from "the gens of the Swedes" is the passage in the *Annales Bertiniani* (cf. the later chronicle formulae "from the Varangian gens", etc.).

In this connection one should turn to the so-called Anonymous report—the source of the data used by Ibn Rusta and others about the tribute collected from the Slavs by the Rus' and the Magyars. This report throws light on the geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe before Oleg's raid on Kiev recounted by the chronicle.

The Arab anonymous author, whose text Ibn Rusta used, reports that the land of the Magyars is situated between the countries of the Pechenegs and of the tribe *Isghil/Asgil, Ashgil* (Esgel, Esegel)—a section of the Bulgars of the Volga; the Magyars collect tribute from the neighbouring Slavs (*aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*), capture and sell them as slaves to the Greeks (ar-Rûm) in their landing stage at K.r.kh (Kerch). The Magyars roam between the two rivers in the country of *aṣ-Ṣaqâliba*—the Itil (which flows to the Khazars) and the Duba (or Ruta): beyond one of these rivers the people Nandar lives (they belong to ar-Rûm) and over their country there is a high mountain, beyond which a Christian people *M.rwât* lives.

Here, the rivers between which the Magyars nomadized presents a major problem. One of them—the Duba was long ago identified with the Danube, and in fact the people *Nandor* lived over it (this was the Magyar term for the Bulgars going back to the ancient Turkic ethnonym *Onogundur*). The Bulgars of the Danube settled in the territory of the Roman Empire (Byzantium) and were ascribed to ar-Rûm. Correspondingly, the mountain beyond which the *M.rwât* lived should be identified with the Carpathians; in fact beyond the Carpathians lived the Slavs—the Moravians. The problem of Itil is more difficult as the Turkic term *itil* meant 'a river'. Most of the scholars identify the Itil here with the Dnieper and not with the Volga (cf. among the latest works—Zakhoder 1967, pp. 47 ff.; Kalinina 2003; Mishin 2002, pp. 54–60). The Magyars migrated over the Dnieper to the land Atelkuzu (*Etelköz* in Magyar means the country between two rivers)—and Constantine Porphyrogenitus tells us about it (*DAI*, Ch. 38). Ibn Rusta remarks that, as people said, "in earlier times the Khazars used to dig ditches against the Magyars and other peoples neighbouring with their country" (cf. Lewicki 1977, pp. 32–35; commentary—p. 107; cf. Zachoder 1967, pp. 48 ff.).

The question of dating the events described above is no less difficult. It is important that the anonymous author and Ibn Rusta do not mention the Rus in the country of the Slavs. In the text ar-Rûsiya "is situated in an island surrounded by a lake. The island where they (ar-Rûs) live extends for three-days travel, it is covered with forests and swamps… They have a king who is called *khâqân of ar-Rûs*. They attack the Slavs, coming to them in their ships: they disembark, capture them, then carry them off to Khazarân and Bulqâr and sell there. They have no ploughed fields and they feed only with the products carried from the country of the Slavs." From there, ar-Rûs used to set off to the Slavs to collect tribute and enslave them like the Magyars. It is significant that in the Anonymous report the routes of ar-Rûs and the Magyars differ: the Magyars trade with Bosporus while ar-Rûs trade with Bulgaria on the Volga and Khazaria. Rus' mainly use the Volga route, their chances to move by the Don are questionable and their route apparantly lies far from the Dnieper. The data from Constantine Porphyrogenitus on the migrations of the Magyars can clear up the situation. He reports (*DAI*, Ch. 38) that for three years the Magyars (whom Constantine calls the Turks) had lived under the direct domination of the Khazars in *Levedia*—the country called after their commander. Then the Pechenegs defeated by the Khazars occupied the country of the Magyars; a part of them was forced

out to Persia (?), and another part migrated to the West to Atelkuzu. The khaqan summoned Levedia from Atelkuzu and offered him the position of the *archon* of the Magyars. The latter refused, and the Magyars elected Arpad their ruler: these data evidently testify to the beginning of the "autonomy" of the Magyars. Scholars traditionally locate the country Levedia to the West of the Don and Atelkuzu—to the West of the Dnieper. Constantine's data about the Magyars (*DAI*, Ch. 38) demonstrate the situation typical of the relations between the Slavs and the nomads which did not consist of mere domination and paying tribute: the Magyars borrowed from the Slavs such important terms as military leader and law. Levedia is called the first military leader (βοεβόδα), though Arpad was elected the archon, whom the Magyars raised on the shield according to the Khazar custom—law (ζάκανα). Characteristically, the Pechenegs also swore oaths to the Greeks according to the own laws (ζάκανα)—the Slavonic *zakon* became the term of the international law (judging from the treaties of the Rus' with the Greeks, the Russian law—*Zakon russkij*—was recognized in Constantinople in the 10th century: cf. *DAI*, p. 290, commentary 5).

Based on these data on Slavic-Magyar cooperation one can suppose that the transformation of the Slavonic culture in the left-bank Dnieper area by mid-9th century—the formation of the Romenskaja culture of the Severjane—was connected with the new Magyar domination, though (according to the Russian chronicle), as previously, the Slavic tribute must have been still paid to the Khazars—through their Magyar vassals (cf. Tolochko 2003, p. 26). In any event, now the area of the Romenskaja culture cannot be characterized as containing numerous Saltovo antiquities (cf. Grigorjev 2000, pp. 180 ff.): the Magyars could have isolated the Slavs of the Dnieper from Khazaria. However the question is discussed—the Varangian tribute from the Slavs before the summoning of the Rus' princes or the tribute paid by the Slavs to the newcomers—'nakhodniki' of Rjurik (PVL, p. 13)—the events described evidently took place before Oleg appeared in Kiev.

By this time, the Magyars had already settled in Atelkuzu to the West of the Dnieper being for a time in conflict with the Khazars who tried to defend themselves with fortifications. According to the Anonymous author, Kerch was no longer a Greek town or a Khazar possession (contrary to king Joseph's data—on the situation in Kerch according to the archaeological data, see Aibabin 1999, p. 222). Evidently, the uprising of the Magyars who joined the Kavars in opposition to Khazar domination

must be dated from this period. However, the joint raid of the Magyars and the Kavars to the West, as far as Vienna, is dated 881 (Zuckerman 1998, pp. 674–679).

Oleg who appeared in Kiev in 882 (according to the chronicle date) took advantage of the situation. Oleg came to Kiev with his *Varangian* and *Slovene* army which was called *Rus'*: the chronicle and other data demonstrate that Ibn Khurdâdhbeh's gloss about the ar-Rûs merchants as a "type of the Slavs" goes back to the 880s though the whole work is dated from the 840s. The gloss itself was connected with the dynamics of the situation in Eastern Europe.

For a proper understanding and dating of the gloss in Khurdâdhbeh's work, the data of other sources should be taken into account. In particular, it is evident that the route of the ar-Rûs merchants to Byzantium (Rum) led them around Khazaria. Evidently, it must be the Dnieper route which was established not earlier than the raid of the Rus' on Constantinople in 860, after the calling-in of the Varangian princes, when, according to the Primary chronicle, Rjurik let Askold and Dyr go there from Novgorod. The corrected date of the passage from the so-called Bavarian Geographer locating the Rus' (Ruzzi) near the Khazars generally corresponds to such a course of events: the list of the peoples was compiled in the second half of the 9th century and, as Alexander V. Nazarenko supposed (1994, pp. 39–40; 1996, pp. 16–17), was based on the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. It also confirms indirectly the relative trustworthiness of the early chronicle dates connected with the dynamics of the development of the river routes in Eastern Europe by the Rus'. Under 882, the Primary Chronicle describes Oleg and Igor—Rjurik's successors—pretending to be merchants travelling "to the Greeks": this is the first mention of the trade route "from the Varangians to the Greeks". Having Askold and Dyr murdered, Oleg settled in Kiev and appropriated the tribute which the Khazars had levied on the left-bank Slavs—*Severjane* and *Radimichi*: so it is evident that the Volyntsevskaja culture marks the borders not of the "Rus' Khaganate" but of the tributary territory, the dominion of Khazaria—the predecessor of the Russian land—the domain of the Kievan prince (cf. Nasonov 1951; Artamonov 1990, p. 277; Petrukhin 1995, pp. 83 ff.).

The Volyntsevskaja culture and the Romenskaja culture after it formed in the 9th century, was the prehistoric kernel of the Rus' land, in the left-bank Dnieper region. The Volyntsevskaja culture, Slavic in its basis, comprises certain elements of the Alanian—Bulgharian Saltovo-Majatskaja culture of the Khazars: some settlements have the traces of

yurts. The remnants of the huge (up to 40 m square) yurt-like dwellings were found in the greatest fortified site of the Volyntsevskaja culture near Bititsa on the Psel' river. One of the first explorers of these finds, D.T. Beresovets, (1965) thought that Bititsa was the administrative centre of the khaganate deep in Slavic territory.[2] Two major monuments associated with the nomad world were also discovered in the left-bank Dnieper region—these are the complexes near Malaja Pereshchepina and Novye Senzshery in the Vorskla basin (cf. Flerov 1996, pp. 33–36, 68–69). Irrespective of the attribution of the famous hoard from Pereshchepina to the Bulghar khan Kubrat (Zalesskaja et al. 1997) or to a Khazar ruler (Ambroz 1982) it is evident that this region was traditionally (from the 7th century) important for the "nomadic empires". The comparison of the archaeological data with the chronicle permits us to suppose that the Volyntsevskaja culture was characteristic of the Slavic tribes—the "confederation" of *Poljane*, *Severjane* and, probably, some units of *Radimichi*—the tributaries to the Khazars (cf. Shcheglova 1987). The finds of the Volyntsevskaja-type monuments near Kiev in the right-bank Dnieper region (cf. Petrashenko 1990) make more clear the stability of the legend of Kij—the founder of Kiev—as a boatman through the Dnieper (though Nestor as the adherent of the version of his princely origin argued against it). In Kiev, the remnants of a "Saltovo"-type burial-ground with cremations have been discovered (Karger 1958, p. 137).

The transformation of Volyntsevo culture to the Romenskaja (Romny) culture in the 9th century was connected with disappearence of yurt-like dwellings and appearence of the first silver hoards in the eastern periphery (Khazar border) of the Severjane tribal territory (cf. Noonan 1983, pp. 273 ff.; Grigorjev 2000). The Khazars—or their allies the Hungarians—had to share their trade profits with the neighbouring Severjane and Radimichi.

Significantly, the Oka segment of the trade route (with the *Vjatichi*—tributaries of the Khazars) accumulated a big part of the silver coins

[2] One of the later scholars interpreted Bititsa as a tribal centre of the Slavic "Rus" opposing the Khazars (cf. Sukhobokov 1992, pp. 65 ff.), but the fact that in this fortified site besides the Slavic semi-earthhouses there were found the traces of the spacious yurts, numerous items of equipment typical of the nomad horsemen, cauldrons, etc. (cf. Sukhobokov, Jurenko 1993) provides evidence also for the presence of steppe-dwellers there. The find of a hoard with agricultural implements is also significant.

imported via Khazaria to the North—to the Upper Volga, Novgorodian land and Scandinavia (cf. Kropotkin 1978; Noonan 1983, pp. 273–276). Evidently, the ar-Rûs merchants had to share their profits with the local population—i.e. with the Vjatichi who controlled the portages from the Upper Don to the Oka. In light of the fact that there are only single finds of hoards in the territory of the Khaganate itself, one has the paradoxical impression that the tributaries had greater possibilities to accumulate silver than the dominating Turkic group (cf. Noonan 1983, p. 276). It seems that these possibilities were connected with their payments in furs and corn as well as with their fur and corn trade. Judging from the Russian chronicle, the tribute from Vjatichi and Radimichi—both of them in regions with hoards—could be estimated in a monetary unit—the *shcheljag*. Under the year 885 the chronicle reports that the Radimichi paid Oleg shcheljags as they had paid the Khazars. Under 964 the Primary chronicle reports that Svjatoslav asked the Vjatichi like Oleg: "to whom do you pay tribute?" They answered that they paid it to the Khazars—a "shcheljag" from each plough. It is clear that the Vjatichi like the Radimichi paid this typical peasant tribute—from each plough—in the same mysterious "shcheljags". Lately the "shcheljags" have been interpreted as a reflection of the Jewish name for a dirhem—"sheleg" ("white", "silver coin"—Novosel'tsev 1990, p. 117). The linguists however think that it could rather be an adoption from the Old Scandinavian *Skillingr* (Vasmer 1987, p. 508; cf. Noonan 1983, pp. 276–277). This hypothesis corresponds with the historical situation: judging from the hoards in the Oka region, from the 9th century the Vjatichi served the Rus merchants in the Oka route and could adopt the West European name of a monetary unit. It seems that the same name (and the name Rus' itself) Oleg brought into the left-bank Dnieper region.

But it is no less clear why the Slavic tributaries of the Khazars, especially in the Middle Dnieper area, were interested in an alliance with the bands of the Rus': they also were forcing their way into the international markets.

The "transfer" of the capital by Oleg to Kiev—"the mother of Russian towns" (in 880s) was evidently connected not only with the ideas of the princely clan that the Rus' princes ruled over all the Slavs (such was the viewpoint of the chronicler) but also with their striving for the world markets around Khazaria. As was noted, the moment was very favourable for this transfer: Khazaria was engaged in a conflict with the now joined Magyars and Kavars. In this connection it is significant

that before the capture of Kiev Oleg stayed in Ugorskoje and the Black Ugrian migration—through Ugorskoje—to their future motherland in Pannonia was apparently described (under 898) as linked with the preceding settling down of the Rus' in Kiev.

Was Oleg's state consolidating many Slavic and Chudian tribes from the Volkhov and the Upper Volga region to the Middle Dnieper Rus' khaganate? The sources indicate that Russian princes kept on claiming the title of *khagan*—the rulers of vast "nomadic empires" dominating over many peoples and tribes—the Avarian and the Khazar khaganates. In early medieval diplomatic practice, *khagan* was considered equal to the title of emperor and therefore the claims of the first Rus' princes and other rulers to this title were disputed in the 9th century diplomatic documents. In 871, the Carolingian emperor Louis II wrote to the Byzantine emperor Basil I: "In Latin codes the title "khagan" is used in respect of the ruler of the Avars but not of the Khazars (Gazani) or the Northmen (Nortmanni), or to the prince of the Bulgars (principum Vulgarum)" (cf. Chronicon Salernitanum. Cap. 107; Nazarenko 1999, pp. 290–292).

This passage indicates that in the Frankish Empire, firstly, the information about the Khazars was scant, and secondly, since the term Rhos appeared in the *Annales Bertiniani*, Rus' had been firmly associated with the Normans while the claims for the title of khagan set up in 839 had not been recognized. Basing themselves on this phrase, both the adherents of the "Russian khaganate" in Kiev and those viewing it as located on the Volkhov came to the paradoxical conclusion that Louis's diplomatic argument was directed against the Byzantine tradition: supposedly, the "Byzantine chancellery" still used titled the ruler of Rus' the 'khagan' (cf. Nazarenko 1999, pp. 290–292). Such a conclusion might be possible if the same chancellery had also titled the Bulgarian prince 'khagan,' but in the 9th century Byzantine Empire the ruler of Bulgaria was still named 'archon' just as the Rus' princes were named 'archons'. The only possessor of the title 'khagan' recognized in the Byzantine Empire was the ruler of Khazaria. Therefore, Louis's message cannot be used as evidence for the existence of the Russian khaganate—it merely provides evidence regarding the claims of the Rus' princes.

Sometimes these claims are considered as evidence that at least in the 830s the Khazar khagan possessed full power and had not been reduced to the position of a "sacral king" by the *bek*. The Rus' princes would not have considered such a position enviable (Novosel'tsev 1990, pp. 134 ff.;

cf. Zuckerman 1995, pp. 251–255). As concerns the prestigiousness of the title 'khagan' for the Russian princes who claimed real power over Eastern Europe, one cannot help noticing a paradox in the sources' data.

In the 920s Ibn Faḍlân described the mode of life of a Rus' prince as that of a sacral king: the king (*malik*) has his residence in a high castle with four hundred champions of his retinue, each of them has his own slave-girl. The most dependable of his men die with the king after his death. All of them—the champions and the girls—sit (and sleep at night) near the king's great and richly ornamented throne-bed, shared with "forty slave girls destined for his bed. And sometimes he lies with one of them in the presence of his fellows, without descending from his throne.. He does not leave the throne even to relieve himself, and if he wishes to ride somewhere, he mounts a horse directly from the throne… He has no other activity except copulating with his girls, drinking and feasting. He has a lieutenant (*khalîfa*), who commands troops, fights his enemies and substitutes for him before his subjects" (Kovalevskij 1956. p. 146).

This description clearly corresponds to the mode of life of the Khazar khagan in Ibn Faḍlân's report:

> As concerns the king of the Khazars, who is called Khâqân, he does not show himself except (once) every four months, appearing at a great distance. They called him Great Khâqân and his deputy is called Khâqân Beh. It is the latter who leads his armies and governs them and takes charge of the affairs of the state and cares for the state and appears before the people and the neighboring kings show submission to him… The custom of the (great) king of the Khazars is that he has twenty five wives. Each of them is one of the daughters of one of the kings who confront him, taken freely or by force… The length of his rule is forty years. If the king exceeds it by a single day, the subjects and his courtiers discharge or kill him, saying his reason has failed and his understanding is become disordered… (Golden, 1980, I, pp. 98–99)

The Russian princely matrimonial tradition might have been influenced by the Khazar one: according to the Primary Chronicle before his baptism prince Vladimir (like king Solomon) had a lot of wives and concubines in Kiev.

But what is most essential is that the description of the Russian "sacral king" does not correspond to Russian historical reality. According to both the Russian Primary Chronicle and the Byzantine sources (Constantine Porphyrogenitus), synchronous to Ibn Faḍlân's report, in their policy prince-*vojevoda* Oleg as well as prince Igor were very active: they were not prisoners in their "castles". And although the Chronicle

stories about the death of the first Russian princes, especially of Oleg (912) and Igor (944), correspond to the motif of the "ritual death", the historical context of their death demonstrates active conflict with the tributaries—the Slavonic tribes. Vladimir absolutely does not resemble the "sacral king" of Ibn Faḍlân's account: to gain possession of Kiev he himself killed his rivals including his elder brother. There are no traces of the "Khazar" diarchy in the 10th century Russian tradition.

It is evident that the claims of the first Russian princes to the prestigious title of *khagan* were mainly connected with their political ambitions and directed "outside" to be demonstrated at the courts of the Byzantine and Frankish emperors (cf. the data of *Annales Bertiniani*). The Russian merchants' tales about the "ceremonial life" of the Russian king also presented information for an "outside" observer (Ibn Faḍlân) and cannot be directly connected with the realities of this life (Beilis 1992; Golden 1993, Petrukhin 2004).

The claims of the first Russian princes to the title and more likely—to the power of the Khazar khagan—were quite natural; the Khaganate not only had spread its rule over the Slavic tribes bordering with the steppe in the Middle Dnieper and Oka regions (Vjatichi), actually it had control over the river routes leading to the Middle East and Byzantium via the Volga, the Don and the Dnieper. In the 960s the Khazar king (*melech*) Joseph wrote to Hasdai ibn Shaprut—the Cordoban caliph's high official: "I protect the mouth of the river (Itil—Volga, V.P.) and prevent the Rus arriving in their ships from setting off by sea against the Ishmaelites (Moslems—V.P.) and (equally) all (their) enemies from setting off by land to Bab (" the Gate", Derbent—V.P.). I wage war with them. If I left them (in peace) for a single hour they would crush the whole land of the Ishmaelites up to Baghdad…" (Kokovtsov 1932, p. 102). Based on the legend of the calling-in of the Varangian princes found in the Russian chronicle, a supposition can be put forward that the original division of the spheres of influence in Eastern Europe went by the Oka basin: the Upper Volga and the territory of Muroma were controlled by Rjurik's men while the Vjatichi paid tribute to the Khazars.

The chronicle describing Oleg's army which included "the Varangians and the Slovene and the others who were called the Rus' " as well as Ibn Khurdâdhbeh's description of the route of the Rûs merchants with their interpreters—the Slavic eunuchs—note the cooperation of the Rus' and the Slavs.

The break-through of the Rus' to the South—to Kiev and Constantinople (c. 860) was connected with the establishment of the direct route

to Byzantium via the Dnieper (the way "from the Varangians to the Greeks") and the securing of it for the Rus' after Oleg's campaign. The appropriation by the Russian prince of the Khazar tribute from Severjane and Radimichi and the formation of the Dnieper Slavs group on the territory controlled by the Khazars obviously resulted in conflict with Khazaria and the trade blocade of Eastern and Northern Europe: in the last quarter of the 9th century the entry of Arab silver through Khazar territory was in crisis (Noonan 1985, 1987, pp. 200 ff.). The inflow of Arab silver to Rus' resumed in the 910s, but now it went from the Samanids through Volgo-Kama Bulgaria—around Khazaria. Bulghar becomes the main trading station for international trade with Rus' (in 921/922 Ibn Faḍlân still called its ruler a tributary of the Khazar khagan). Ibn Faḍlân himself came with the caliph's embassy which was invited to Bulghar to convert the Volga Bulghars to Islam (Kovalevskij 1956): a fact which indicates its relative independence; in 950s the Bulghar rulers began to mint their own coins—and this is a demonstration of real independence (cf. Noonan 1992, p. 251).

The Middle Dnieper region matched the Middle Volga. Here the maximum number of silver coins (more than 10000) dates to the first quarter of the 10th century—the hoards were found on the both banks of the Dnieper including Kiev—and these are the first Kievan hoards (NAR, pp. 359–360). Oleg who had firmly established himself in Kiev continued the expansion along the route "from the Varangians to the Greeks". Having united in his army all his subject tribes he undertook a campaign against Constantinople (in PVL under 907) and concluded a treaty with the Greeks in 911 (its text is preserved in PVL). However, in this treaty Oleg was titled "great prince" (*archon* is the corresponding Greek title) but not "khagan"—the Khazar khaganate with a legitimate ruler still existed (cf. Petrukhin 2002).

These events described in PVL were revised more than once in present-day historiography. This "revision" was based on a formal comparison of the data of the Novgorod I Chronicle (NPL) with the so-called Cambridge document alongside the documents of the Jewish-Khazar correspondence (s. among the latest works Golb&Pritsak 1997, 2004 and the discussion in the editor's commentary). NPL dates Igor's unsuccessful raid on Constantinople back to 920 and Oleg's revenge campaign—to 922, while the Cambridge document associates the raid on Byzantium of a "melek" of Rus' Hlgu with the reign of Romanus Lecapenus (920–944). The motif of Oleg's death on his way "over the sea" (NPL) coincides with Hlgu's death "over the sea" (Cambridge document). In other details

the descriptions of the events in NPL and the Cambridge document are completely different: in NPL Oleg undertook a successful revenge campaign (after Igor's defeat at the walls of Constantinople), while Hlgu, after his defeat at the hands of the Khazars, was forced, on their demand, to invade Byzantium and was utterly defeated.

The identification of Oleg and Hlgu based on the likeness of their names and some motifs in the narrative sources should be considered a sort of "historiographic misunderstanding": Oleg's grave in Kiev was well known according not only to PVL but also to the 12th century Kievan chronicle, while the text of NPL presents a shortened local version of the chronicle legend about Oleg's death. The date 920 of Igor's campaign in NPL and the resulting date of Oleg's campaign are connected not with the real dates of certain deeds by Rus' princes but with the limited circle of sources available to the author of the Primary Chronicle. He did not know George the Monk's chronicle with its precise date of Igor's campaign—941 and dated it from the early period of Romanus Lecapenus's reign. The name Oleg/Hlgu was a "patrimonial" Russian princes' name and belonged to a Russian *princely clan* representative who had been obviously defeated by the Khazars and was forced to participate in the campaign against Constantinople among Igor's troops in 941. This name was not mentioned among the names of the princes of "Russian gens" in Igor's treaty with the Greeks (944) because Hlgu was not alive by that time. Correspondingly, the Cambridge document's statement that after Hlgu had been defeated Rus' submitted to Khazar rule should be regarded as a traditional view of the "nomadic states" regarding their defeated opponents and not as the real domination of the Khazar khaganate which was on the eve of its fall (Petrukhin 2000).

Obviously, Hlgu was not a Kievan ruler: supposedly, he resided in Chernigov—the centre of the Dnieper left-bank traditionally connected with Khazaria. Kiev itself was formed as a town and the centre of Poljanian land in the pre-Christian and the "pre-Russian" period—the period of the Khazar tribute. In the view of the newly found letter from the Kievan Jewish-Khazar community (palaeographically it is dated to the 10th century) this period evoked (and revitalized) a new burst of interest in the problem of the origin of Kiev. The latest attempt by Omelian Pritsak (cf. Golb, Pritsak 1982) to regard the letter from the Kievan Jewish-Khazar community as evidence of Khazar rule over Kiev in the 930s as well as the attempt to identify the Poljane with the Khazars seems merely paradoxical. The contents of the letter indicate, rather, the rule of non-Jews (*goyim*) over the Kievan Jews who were forced to send the

debtor, Jacob, a member of their community, with his request for help so far abroad that the letter was found in the Cairo genizah. In Old Rus' the right to administer justice belonged to the prince, and judging from the treaties between Rus' and the Greeks of 911 and 944, financial operations were also under the control of the prince and his administration. It should be noted that according to the letter the Kievan community seems to have been relatively poor: for a debt of 100 coins it managed to gather only 60. In Old Rus' silver coins—Arabic dirhems (Old Russian *kunas*) were in use, and thousands of them have been found in Russian hoards. It is difficult to form a judgment on numbers of the community: there are eleven signatures under the letter, evidently they belonged to the heads of wealthy families.[3]

In any event, certain traces of this community in pre-Christian Kiev really did exist. While the hypothesis of the Khazar (Khorezmian) origin of the name *Kiev* arbitrarily tears this toponym out of the range of similar Slavonic names (cf. Trubachev 1992, pp. 58 ff. and the ongoing discussion with the author of this hypothesis, O. Pritsak, in—Golb, Pritsak 1997, pp. 210 ff.), the name of the other "Poljanian brother"—legendary founder of Kiev *Khoriv* (*Khoreb*) and the mountain-name *Khorevitsa* demonstrate the Biblical tradition. It was on Mount Horeb that Moses saw the Burning Bush and received the Tablets of the Law; there also the Holy Land was promised (Exodus 3.1–2 ff.). The Christian chronicler obviously did not "recognize" the Biblical name in the Kievan placename: evidently, the mountain—name Khorevitsa had been deeply rooted in the pre-Christian Kievan microtoponymy; judging from the Slavonic names of the Kievan community members (cf. the "oxymoron"-like name Gostjata ben Kjabar Kohen, etc.—Torpusman 1989) this microtoponymy was also Slavonic. Besides that, we have some other grounds for searching for traces of the Jewish-Khazar community in this microtoponym: the treatise "De administrando imperio" by Constantine Porphyrogenitus preserved another Kievan toponym—the name of the fortress *Sambatas* (*DAI*, ch. 9) which also refers to Jewish sources.

---

[3] The interpretation of the names of the community members—signatories to the letter (Turkic, according to O. Pritsak, or Slavonic, according to A. Torpusman) should be considered hypothetical. Equally, the meaning of the runic inscription in the lower left part of the letter is not clear: its interpretation by O. Pritsak as a decision by a Khazar official in Kiev (*hoqurum*—"I have read") is based not on the Khazar but on the Orkhon tradition and specialists consider it questionable (cf. remarks by Vladimir Napol'skikh // Golb, Pritsak 2004, pp. 221 ff.).

The names Sambatas, Sambation, etc. refer to a miraculous river from the Talmudic legends which seethes on weekdays and lies at rest on Sabbaths; beyond it the ten lost tribes of Israel were condemned to live in exile (Arkhipov 1995, pp. 71–96). This river flows along the extreme frontier of the inhabited world: for the Jewish diaspora Kiev was such an extreme frontier.

Obviously, the problem of the "non-recognition" of the name *Horeb* by the Russian chronicler cannot be explained as a simple lack of knowledge of the Biblical text (though the Philosopher's Speech—the brief chronicle's account of the sacred history—telling about how the Law granted, does not mention Mount Horeb). In the chronicle the theme of the Exodus is directly connected with the deliverance from the Khazar tribute. And it is not a simple establishment of "historical fact"—the domination of Russian princes—contemporaries of the chronicler—over the Khazars (in Tmutarakan'): the motif of this deliverance concludes the Cosmographic Introduction to PVL, after it follows the chronicle itself—the year by year history of the Russian land. The Cosmographic Introduction "continues" the sacred history with the history of Slavic settlement in Japheth's "lot"—the "lot" of Noah's son who was specially blessed (Kravetskij 1996, p. 89); moreover, the coming deliverance of Slovene—Poljane from the Khazar captivity with their simultaneous obtaining the future Russian land as the Promised Land became the central episode of this Introduction. Kiev as the centre of this land could not be associated with a "marginal", though a sacred locus like Horeb (according to the chronicle's gloss about the route "from the Varangians to the Greeks", the approaching glory was predicted for Kiev by the Apostle Andrew): such an association was characteristic of the preceding Jewish-Khazar tradition, and the chronicler was overcoming it (in this respect he was the follower of the Russian princes—see Petrukhin 2003).

The chronicle associates the overcoming of the Khazar tradition not only with the military and political crash of Khazaria under Svjatoslav, but also with the following act of the Choice of Faith. It reports very briefly about the campaign against Khazaria. Under 964 it tells that Svjatoslav campaigned on the Oka and the Volga (!) and subjugated the Vjatichi who had settled there. Then, "Svjatoslav marched against the Khazars; when the Khazars learned that, they came out with their prince—the khagan [...] Svjatoslav overpowered the Khazars and seized their town—Belaja Vezha. He defeated both the Jas and the Kassogians". The Khazar town should obviously be interpreted as their capital Itil (Atil) in the Lower Volga; Belaya Vezha—the former fortress Sarkel

which the Byzantians had built on the Don for the Khazars—became a Russian town. The prince conquered the Jas (the Alans) and the Kassogians (the Adygeis) in the North Caucasus; probably, Tmutarakan' was also subjugated by Kiev. Obviously, Svjatoslav had crushed the khagan's domain—the territory for nomadizing between Sarkel on its western frontier and Itil (Atil) as the winter camp (cf. Golden 1980, pp. 82–83; Pletneva 1986, pp. 49–50) which was described by king Joseph in his letter. Thus, the prince made a circular raid through the Khazar dominions moving from the Lower Volga to the Don and returned to Kiev (cf. Artamonov 1962, pp. 426–428). The mention of the second campaign against the Vjatichi under 966 is the result of the later division of the Initial Chronicle text into annual records—cf. Petrukhin 1995, pp. 103 ff.). Mstislav, settled in Tmutarakan' by his father Vladimir Svjatoslavich, again (in 1022) had to campaign against the Kassogians who surrendered to the Russian prince. Significantly, when intervening in the princely internecine struggles in 1024, Mstislav came to Rus' with "Khazars and the Kassogians" and he laid his claim to Kiev—thus trying to "restore" the Khazar dominion while his brother Jaroslav was sitting in Novgorod. The whole situation seems to "return" to the beginning of Russian history—to the epoch of Oleg, but the "return" did not take place—the Kievans rejected Mstislav and he was forced to reside in the left-bank Chernigov (PVL, pp. 64–65). This connection between Chernigov and Tmutarakan' (the steppe in the broader sense) was typical of the whole early medieval period of Russian history. In any event, when Russian princes resided in Tmutarakan' in the late 11th century they could be titled the "archons of Matrakhia (Tmutarakan'), Zikhia (in Old Russian the Kassogian realm) and the whole of Khazaria"—such was the inscription on the Byzantine seal of Oleg Svjatoslavich, the son of a *Chernigovian* prince (Janin 1970, pp. 26 ff.). The past political domination of Khazaria over Rus' was rather illusory, but equally the Russian rule over the lands which the Khazar khaganate had once possessed was also not long. In the early 12th century, Byzantium established the control over Tmutarakan' and in the mid-12th century the Russians were forced to leave Belaja Vezha.[4]

In the chronicle, the overcoming of the Khazar tradition is chiefly associated with the Choice of Faith and the Christianization of Rus'

[4] Pls. provide footnote text.

under Vladimir in 986. The chronicle motif of the Choice of Faith was put in a concrete historical context. The arrival in Kiev of envoys from the Moslem Bulghars was not a mere missionary action—they came to conclude a peace treaty after the war of 985, but Moslems could not conclude it with the pagans. Cf. the report of Ibn al-Athîr about the Khazar conversion to Islam after the fall of the khaganate under Svjatoslav: in 965 "a tribe of Turks (the Oghuz—V.P.) attacked the Khazar land and the Khazars appealed to the people of Khorezm, but the latter denied assistance saying that they were infidels (*al-kuffâr*), but if they accepted Islam they would help. They converted to Islam except their king, and then the people of Khorezm helped them and forced the Turks to set them free, and after that their king also accepted Islam" (Novosel'tsev 1990, p. 222). Evidently, here the pagan Khazars are implied: the Judaists are not infidels but the "people of Scripture" (*ahl al-kitâb*), that is why the Moslem author highlights in particular the Judaic Khazar king who converted to Islam separately from his people. Obviously, the Bulghar envoys also made the conversion of the infidel Vladimir to the "true faith" a condition of the peace treaty with Rus'—here their missionary activities were traditionally grounded.

The attempts of the German missionaries to convert Rus' to Christianity also had a tradition: as Vladimir's answer to the embassy of the "Germans from Rome" indicates, the "fathers" of the prince did not accept their faith.

Correspondingly, the character of the Jewish-Khazar embassy ("Khazarian Jews") needs a thorough historical analysis, especially in view of the fact that in the Old Russian (and Byzantine) literature it is almost the only mention of the Judaism of the Khazars (or in Khazaria—cf. Chekin 1990; cf. on Constantine the Philosopher's polemic with the Jews before the khagan—Arkhipov 1995, pp. 17 ff.). The scholars interpreted the acknowledgement of the Jews that "their land"—Jerusalem—was given to the Christians as evidence of the later origin of the whole motif of the Jewish embassy: in fact, Jerusalem was captured by the Christians in the course of the first Crusade in 1099 (PVL, p. 454: cf. Berlin 1919, pp. 134–135). This statement, however, should be rejected on the following grounds: firstly, the polemic on faith is included in the Novgorod I Chronicle as well as in PVL and therefore it is the part of the text of the so-called Initial Chronicle of 1095. Secondly, the Crusadors were Latin Catholics, and the First Crusade was undertaken in the period of the intensified Greek—Latin (and Russian—Latin) polemic after the division between the Greek and the Latin Churches in 1054. The whole

dispute corresponds to the traditions of this polemic, and the seizure of Jerusalem by the Crusaders could hardly be interpreted by the chronicler as the establishment of Christian rule over it, especially in view of the fact that the town was captured from the Moslems and not from the Jews. More likely, the chronicle polemic on faith reflects the traditional "imperial" Byzantine claims on the Holy Land: actually, the "Philosopher's Speech" tells that "Romans" (Rumians) have captured the land of Jews (PVL, p. 40). Thus, the chronicle motif of the Khazarian Jews follows the early tradition and not the construction dated from the early 12th century.

Nowadays after the discovery of the letter from the Kievan Jewish-Khazar community the local Kievan sources of this tradition become quite obvious. Sometimes a special purpose is perceived even in the chronicler's words about the Khazarian Jews stating that they had heard about the arrival of the Bulgars and the Germans to Vladimir. In fact it was a mere rhetorical device typical of the chronicle's debates on faith: according to the chronicle, the Philosopher commissioned by the Greeks arrived after the Jews and also spoke about the rumours he had heard. The Philosopher had heard only about the German and Bulghar embassies—so Vladimir reported to him about the Jewish embassy and became the addressee of the "Philosopher's Speech" with its anti-Jewish polemic. Despite the wide-spread opinion (cf. Makarij 1994, pp. 230 ff.; Toporov 1995, pp. 517 ff.) the Jewish activity could not match the missionary work of the Latins and the Moslems on the ground that missionary work was not characteristic of the Judaic tradition (it was noticed even by V.N. Tatishchev in the 18th century—Tatishchev 1995, p. 231). It was prescribed to warn those who wanted to be converted to Judaism of the persecutions of the Jews for their faith (and not to claim that their desires became real)—cf. the motif of the dispersion of the Jews for their sins in the Jewish-Khazar correspondence.

In the epoch of the milllenarian expectations (the end of the 1st millennium of the Christian Age) the Kievan community rooted in the Slavic-Russian world could participate in a traditional medieval interconfessional dispute despite the traditional Jewish prohibition of the missionary work (Petrukhin 2001a).

The historiographical notions of the real possibilities for spreading and even propagation of Judaism in Rus' present an obvious overstatement. Rus' was guided by the Byzantine cultural model and adopted from Byzantium not only Christianity but also the active (polemical) rejection of other confessions; the polemic on faith as well as the

"Sermon on Law and Grace" by Ilarion are full of this rejection. The anti-Jewish rhetoric of the "Sermon" was actual so far as Rus' became the successor of the Khazar khaganate: the Russian princes—Vladimir and Jaroslav—received the right to the title of khagan (this title seems to be recognized in Byzantium: Vasilevski 1991, pp. 14 ff.), but for Christian Rus' the state religion of Khazaria was the Past—Old—Law. The "new" Russian people, as it was called by Ilarion as well as by the Chronicler, was opposed to the "old" people of the Old Testament as the last people blessed by the Grace. It is essential that Ilarion did not use the Slavonic term *židove* for the Jews, actual neighbours of the Slavs, but the bookish term *ijudei* (Birnbaum 1981, pp. 228–229). As was already noted (cf. Fedotov 1966) the historical conception of the chronicler compared the deliverance of Rus' from the Khazar captivity with the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian exile: even Byzantium (practically not mentioned by Ilarion—cf. BLDR. V.1, p. 44) was excluded from this historical tradition. This opposition of the "old" and "new" peoples, the Jews and the Russians, became constant for the whole Old Russian (and not only Old Russian) tradition.

Literature

Ambroz 1982: Ambroz A.K. O Voznesenskom komplekse VIII v. Na Dnepre—vopros interpretatsii // *Drevnosty epokhi Velikogo pereselenija narodov*. Moscow, "Nauka", 1982, pp. 204–222.

Annales Bertiniani. Rec. G. Waitz. Hannoverae. 1883.

Arkhipov 1995: Arkhipov Andrej. *Po tu storonu Sambationa. Etjudy o russko-evrejskikh kul'turnykh svjaz'jakh i literaturnykh kontaktakh* (Berkeley, 1995).

Artamonov 1962: Mikhail I. Artamonov. *Istorija khazar*. Leningrad, State Hermitage, 1962.

—— 1990: Mikhail I. Artamonov. Pervyje stranitsy russkoj istorii v archeologicheskom osveschenii // *Sovetskaja archeologija*. 1990. No. 3, pp. 271–290.

Beilis 1992: Beilis V.M. Ibn Fadlan o "dvojevlastii" u rusov v 920 gg.// *Obrazovanije Drevnerusskogo gosudarstva. Spornyje problemy*. Tezisy dokladov. Moscow, 1992, pp. 3–5.

Beresovets 1965: D.T. Beresovets'. Slov'iani i plemena saltivs'koji kul'tury // *Arkheologija*. 19. Kiev, 1965.

Berlin 1919: Isaja Berlin. *Istoricheskije sud'by evrejskogo naroda na territorii Russkogo gosudarstva*. Petrograd, 1919.

Birnbaum 1981: Henrik Birnbaum. On Jewish Life and Anti-Jewish Sentiments in Medieval Russia // *Birnbaum H. Essays in Early Slavic Civilisation*. München, 1981, pp. 215–245.

BLDR: *Biblioteka literatury Drevnej Rusi*. V.1. Sankt-Peterburg, "Nauka", 1997.

Chekin 1990: Leonid S. Chekin The role of Jews in early Russian civilization in the light of a new discovery and new controversies // *Russian History*. V. 17, No. 4, pp. 379–394.

Chronicon Salernitanum/ U. Westerbergh. Stockholm, 1956.
DAI: Constantine Porphyrogenitus. *De administrando imperio*. Ed. Gennadij G. Litavrin, Anatolij P. Novosel'tsev. Moscow, "Nauka", 1989. Cf. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. *De administrando imperio*. Ed. and tr. G. Moravcsik and R.J.H. Jenkins. (Dumbarton Oaks texts 1) Washington, 1967.
Fedotov 1966: Georgij Fedotov. *The Russian Religious Mind* (I). Kievan Christianity. Belmont, 1966.
Flerov 1996: Valerij S. Flerov. *Rannesrednevekovyle jurtoobraznyje zhilischa Vostochnoj Evropy*. Moscow, 1996.
Franklin, Shepard 1996: Franklin Simon and Shepard Jonathan. *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200*. London and New York. Longman, 1996.
Golb, Pritsak 1982: Norman Golb, Omelian Pritsak. *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century*. Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1982.
—— 1997: Norman Golb, Omelian Pritsak. *Khazarsko-evrejskije documenty X veka*. Ed. Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin. Moscow, Jerusalem, "Gesharim", 1997. 2nd edition—2004.
Golden 1980: Peter B. Golden. *Khazar studies*. V.1. Akadémiai Kiadó, Bpst, 1980.
—— 1993: Peter B. Golden. "Gosudarstvo i gosudarstvennost' u khazar. Vlast' khazarskih khaganov", *Fenomen vostochnogo despotizma. Struktura upravlenija i vlasti*. Moscow, "Vostochnaja literatura", 1993, pp. 211–233.
Grigoriev 2000: Aleksandr V. Grigoriev. *Severskaja zemlja v VIII—nachale IX veka po archeologicheskim dannym*. Tula, 2000.
Janin 1970: Valentin L. Janin. *Aktovije pechati Drevnej Rusi*. V. 1. Moscow, "Nauka". 1970.
Kalinina 1986: Tatiana M. Kalinina. Torgovyje puti Vostochnoj Evropy IX v.// *Istorija SSSR*. No. 4, pp. 68–82.
—— 2003: Tatiana M. Kalinina. Interpretatsija nekotorykh izvestij o slavjanakh v "Anonimnoj zapiske" // *Drevnejshije gosudarstva Vostochnoj Evropy. 2001*. Moscow, "Vostochnaja literatura", 2003, pp. 204–216.
Karger 1958: Mikhail K. Karger. *Drevnij Kiev*. Moscow-Leninrgad, Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1958. V.1.
Konovalova 2000: Irina Konovalova. Les Rus sur les voies de commerce de l'Europe orientale d'après les sources arabo-persanes // *Les centres proto-urbains Russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient*, ed. M. Kazanski, A. Nercessian et. C. Zuckerman. Paris, 2000, pp. 395–408.
Kljuchevskij 1987: Vasilij O. Kljuchevskij. *Sochinenija v devjati tomakh*. Moscow, "Mysl' ". T. 1.
Kokovtsov 1932: Pavel K. Kokovtsov. *Evrejsko-khazarskaja perepiska v X veke*. Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1932.
Kravetskij 1996: A.G. Kravetskij. Opyt slovarja liturgicheskyh symvolov // *Slavjanovedenije*. 1996, No. 4, pp. 96–105.
Kropotkin 1978: Vladislav V. Kropotkin. K topograpfii kladov kuficheskikh monet IX v. v Vostochnoj Evrope // *Drevnjaja Rus' i slavjane*. Moscow, "Nauka", 1978, pp. 111–117.
Lewicki 1977: Tadeusz Lewicki. *Źródła arabskie do dziejów słowiańszyzny*. T.2. Cz.2. Wrozław—Warsaw, Ossolineum, 1977.
Makarij 1994: Makarij, mitropolit Moskovskij i Kolomenskij. *Istorija Russkoj tserkvi*. V.1. Moscow, 1994.
Melnikova, Petruchin 1991: Elena Melnikova, Vladimir Petruchin. The origin and evolution of the name Rus'. The Scandinavians in Eastern-European ethno-political processes before the 11th century // *Tor*. Vol. 23. 1990–91, pp. 203–234.
Mishin 2002: Dmitrij E. Mishin. *Saqaliba: slavjane v islamskom mire*. Moscow, Institut vostokovedenija, 2002.
Napol'skokh 2004: Vladimir V. Napol'skikh. K chteniju tak nazyvaemoj "Khazarskoj nadpisi" v Kievskom pis'me // Golb & Pritsak 2004, pp. 221 ff.

NAR: *Novoe v arkheologii Kieva*. Kiev, «Naukova dumka», 1981.
Nasonov 1951: Arsenij N. Nasonov. *"Russkaja zemlja" i obrazovanije territorii Drevnerusskogo gosudarstva*. Moscow, Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1951.
Nazarenko 1999: Alexandr V. Nazarenko. Zapadnoevropejskie istochniki // Mel'nikova E. (ed.). *Drevnjaja Rus' v svete zarubezhnkyh istochnikov*. Moscow, Logos, 1999, pp. 259–406.
Noonan 1983: Thomas S. Noonan. What does historical numismatics suggest about the history of Khazaria in the ninth century? // *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*. III, 1983, pp. 265–281.
—— 1985: Thomas S. Noonan. The first major silver crisis in Russia and the Baltic. C. 875–900 // Hikuin. 1985. No. 11, pp. 41–50.
—— 1987: Thomas S. Noonan. Khazaria as an intermediary between Islam and Eastern Europe in the second half of the ninth century: the numismatic perspective // *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*. V [1987], pp. 179–204.
—— 1992: Thomas S. Noonan. Fluctuations in Islamic trade with Eastern Europe during the Viking Age// *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. V. 16. 1992, pp. 237–253.
—— 1994: Thomas S. Noonan. The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce // *Developments Around the Baltic and the North Sea in the Viking Age*. Stockholm, 1994. pp. 215–236.
Nosov 2000: Evgenij Nosov. Riurikovo Gorodišče et Novgorod // *Les centres protourbains Russes*, pp. 143–172.
Novosel'tsev 1965: Anatolij P. Novosel'tsev. Vostochnye istochniki o vostochnykh slavjanakh i Rusi VI–IX vv. // Anatolij P. Novosel'tsev et al. *Drevnerusskoe gosudarstvo i ego mezhdunarodnoe znachenie*. Moscow, "Nauka", 1965, pp. 355–419.
Novosel'tsev 1990: Anatolij P. Novosel'tsev. *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo i ego rol' v istorii Vostochnoj Evropy i Kavkaza*. Moscow, "Nauka", 1990.
—— 1991: Anatolij P. Novosel'tsev. Drevnerusskoje gosudarstvo i ego pervyj pravitel' // *Voprosy istorii*. 1991. No. 2–3, pp. 3–20.
NPL: Novgorodskaja Pervaja letopis' starshego i mladshego izvodov. Moscow—Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR,1950.
Petrashenko 1990: Petrashenko V.A. Volyntsevskaja kultura na Pravoberezhnom Podneprov'je // *Problemy arkheologii Juzhnoj Rusi*. Kijev, «Naukova Dumka», 1990, pp. 47–50.
Petrukhin 1992: Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin. The Normans and the Khazars in the South of Rus': The Formation of the Russian land in the Middle Dnepr area // *Russian History*. Vol. 19. 1992, pp. 393–400.
—— 1995: Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin. *Nachalo etnokul'turnoj istorii Rusi IX–XI vv*. Moscow-Smolensk , "Gnosis"—"Rusich", 1995.
—— 2000: Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin. Knjaz' Oleg, Helgu Cambridgeskogo documenta i russkij knjazheskij rod // *Drevnejshije gosudarstva Vostochnoj Evropy. 1998*. Moscow, "Vostochnaja literatura", 2000, pp. 222–229.
—— 2001: Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin. K voprosu o sakral'nom statuse khazarskogo khagana: traditsija i real'nost // *Slavjane i ikh sosedi*. Vyp. 10. *Slavjane i kochevoj mir*. Moscow, "Nauka", 2001, pp. 73–78.
—— 2001a: Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin. The decline and legacy of Khazaria // *Europe around the year 1000*. Ed. Pr. Urbańczyk. Warszawa. 2001, pp. 109–122.
—— 2002: Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin. Khazaria and Russia: sovereignty and territory in the Eastern Europe in the 9th to the beginning of the 10th centuries // *Centre. Region. Periphery. Medieval Europe*. Basel, 2002. Hertingen, pp. 528–532.
—— 2003: Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin. Istorija slavjan i Rusi v kontekste biblejskoj traditsii: mif i istorija v "Povesti vremennych let" // *Drevnejshije gosudarstva Vostochnoj Evropy. 2001*. Moscow, "Vostochnaja literatura", 2003, pp. 93–113.
—— 2004: Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin. A note on the Sacral Status of the Khazarian Khagan: Tradition and Reality // *Monotheistic Kingship. The Medieval Variants*. ed. A. Al-

Azmeh and J.M. Bak CEU Medievalia. Budapest, Central European University Press, 2004, pp. 269–275.
Pletneva 1986: Svetlana A. Pletneva. *Khazary*. Moscow, "Nauka", 1986. Cf. Pletnjowa S.A. *Die Chazaren*. Leipzig. 1978.
—— 1996: Svetlana A. Pletneva. *Sarkel i "Shelkovyj put'"*. Voronezh, Izdatel'stvo Voronezhskogo universiteta, 1996.
Potin 1970: V.M. Potin. Russko-skandinavskie svjazi po numizmaticheskim dannym // *Istoricheskije svjazi Skandinavii i Rossii*. Leningrad, "Nauka", 1970, pp. 64–80.
PVL: *Povest' vremennykh let* (ed. Dmitrij S. Likhachev, Mikhail B. Sverdlov). Sankt-Peterburg, "Nauka", 1996.
Sedov 1999: Valentin V. Sedov. *U istokov vostochnoslavjanskoj gosudarstvennosti*. Moscow, URSS, 1999.
Shachmatov 1919: Aleksej A. Shakhmatov. *Drevnejshije sud'by russkogo plemeni*. Petrograd, 1919.
Shcheglova 1987: O l'ga A. Shcheglova. Saltovskije veshchi na pamjatnikakh volyntsevskogo tipa // *Archeologicheskije pamjatniki epokhi rannego zheleza Vostochnoevropejskoj lesostepi*. Voronezh, 1987, pp. 77–85.
Sukhobokov 1992: Oleg V. Sukhobokov. *Dniprovs'ke lisostepove livoberezhzhja u VIII–XIII st*. Kijiv, «Naukova dumka», 1992.
—— 1993: Oleg V. Sukhobokov, S.P. Jurenko. Novoe v izuchenii volyntsevskih pamjatnikov // *Slavjanskaja archeologija*. 1990. *Materialy po archeologii Rossii*. Vyp. 1. Moscow, 1993, pp. 121–135.
Tatishchev 1995: Vasilij N. Tatishchev. *Sobranije sochinenij*. V. 2. Moscow, "Ladomir", 1995.
Tolochko 2003: Petr P. Tolochko. *Kochevye narody stepej i Kievskaja Rus'*. Sankt-Petersburg, Aleteja, 2003.
Toporov 1995: Vladimir N. Toporov. *Svjatost' i svjatye v russkoj dukhovnoj kul'ture* V. 1. Moscow, "Gnosis"—Shkola "Jazyki russkoj kul'tury", 1995.
Torpusman 1989: Abram N. Torpusman. "Antroponimija i etnicheskije kontakty narodov Vostochnoj Evropy v srednije veka", *Imja—etnos—istorija*. Moscow, Institut etnografii, 1989, pp. 48–53.
Trubachev 1992: Oleg N. Trubachev. *V poiskakh edinstva*. Moscow, "Nauka", 1992.
Vasilevski 1991: Tadeush Vasilevski. Obrashchennaja v khristianstvo Rus' v vyzantijskoj sem'e pravitelej i narodov // *Byzantina, Metabyzantina i Rus' (IX–XVII vv.). XVIII Mezhdunarodnyj congress vyzantinistov*. Major papers. Moscow, "Nauka", 1991, pp. 8–26.
Vasmer 1987: Max Vasmer. *Etimologicheskij slovar' russkogo jazyka*. Vol. IV. Moscow, "Progress", 1987.
Vinnikov, Pletneva 1998: Vinnikov A.Z., Pletneva S.A. *Na severnyh rubezhakh Khazarskogo kaganata. Majatskoe poselenie*. Voronezh, 1998.
Zakhoder 1967: Boris N. Zakhoder. *Kaspijskij svod svedenij o Vostochnoj Evrope*. Moscow, "Nauka", T. II, 1967.
Zalesskaja et al. 1997: Vera N. Zalesskaja, Zlata A. L'vova, Boris I. Marshak, Irina V. Sokolova, Natalija N. Fonjakova. *Sokrovischa khana Kubrata*. Sankt-Petersburg, State Hermitage, 1997. Cf. *Treasure of khan Kubrat. Culture of Bulgars, Khazars, Slavs*. Sofia, 1989.
Zuckerman 1995: Constantine Zuckerman. On the date of the Khazar's conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus Oleg and Igor // *Revue des Études Byzantines* 53/ 1995, pp. 237–270.
—— 1997: Constantine Zuckerman. Les Hongrois au pays de Lebedia. Une nouvelle puissance aux confins de Byzance et de la Khazarie ca 836–889 // Oikonomides N. (ed.) / *Byzantium at war*. Athens. 1997.
—— 2000: Constantine Zuckerman. Deux étapes de la formation de l'ancien État russe // *Les centres proto-urbains Russes*, pp. 95–120.

THE KHAZARS AND THE MAGYARS

András Róna-Tas

Introduction

My paper is based on my book *Hungarians and Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Budapest, 1999, CEU Press), which has been published several years ago in Hungary. It deals in 600 pages with the early history of the Hungarians and East Europe until the middle of the 10th century. It focuses on the relationship of the Hungarians with the Turks, above all with the Khazars. In the following I shall concentrate on some of my new results leaving aside references and citations, which can be found in at my book. See also the bibliography the end of this paper.

1. *Khazar studies in Hungary*

The main periods of Khazar studies in Hungary are the following: a) Khazars in the Latin chronicles 12th–17th centuries, b) Khazars in the historical works of the 18th-early 19th centuries, c) Khazars in the so-called Ugor—Turkic discussion on the origin of the Hungarians, Vámbéry and Budenz, Hunfalvy, Pauler, Munkácsi, d) From Zoltán Gombocz (1898) to Louis Ligeti and e) present studies. Of great importance is the work of Gombocz (*Die bulgarisch-türkischen Lehnwörter in der ungarischen Sprache* 1912), less known are the changes in the opinion of Gombocz. It is also unknown that the key figure of Hungarian oriental studies, Louis Ligeti, gave a lecture on the Khazars in 1945 at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which he never published. Ligeti's paper on the Kievan letter (1981, published in 1984) raises some problems of the word written in runiform letters in connection with earlier solutions given by Pritsak (1982). His last, great monograph published in 1986 *The Turkic connections of the Hungarian language before the Conquest and in the age of the Árpáds* remained inaccessible to the greater circle of scholars, not only because it appeared only in Hungarian, but also because of its structure and uneven reasoning. If I should summarise the history of the Khazar

studies in Hungary in one sentence I would say: it is the history of the suppression of the "Khazar problem".

2. *The name of the Khazars*

The name of the Khazars played an important role in the identification of their language. In his work published in 1912, Z. Gombocz analysed the name of the Khazars. He claimed that a) it is a self-designation, b) it has a word medial *-z-* and c) it is of Turkic origin. From these he came to the conclusion: "Aus der oben gegebenen deutung des namens **Kazar** kann nur gefolgert werden, dass das chasarische eine *z*-sprache war, und folgedessen als quelle der alttürkischen lehnwörter der ungarischen sprache nicht in betracht kommt" (1912:199). This claim was accepted by later research and influenced not only research on the Turkic loanwords in Hungarian but also the judgement of the main historical questions of the Khazars. We know from Priskos that around 463 A.D. Oghur tribes appeared in Eastern Europe. After the establishment of the first Turkic Khaghanate in 551 East Turkic tribes also reached Europe. If the Khazars spoke a z-Turkic language, they may have arrived in the West only after the middle of the 6th century, if they spoke an *r*-Turkic language they pertained to the groups, which arrived in the middle of the 5th century.

The discovery of the Terh Inscription by C. Dorjsüren and its publication by S. Kljashtornyj in 1980 (English version in 1982) brought a decisive change in the discussion. The Terh inscription written in the Turkic runiform script and dated from the year 754 A.D., contained the Turkic form of the name as *Qasar*. In two successive papers published in 1982 and 1983 respectively, I demonstrated that the form with intervocalic *-s-* is the original form, I showed that the verb *qaz-*, on which the etymology of Gombocz was based, never existed. I pointed out that the form *Qasar* is extant in other sources as well (the Shine usu and Tez inscriptions, Chinese, Syriac sources etc.). Finally I claimed that the name *Qasar* through Iranian mediation went back to a title, *qasar*, which is derived from the name Caesar, as are the titles Kaiser or Tsar. If the claim of Altheim (1959), more recently accepted and argued by Ludwig (1982) can be corroborated that the Khazars, or at least their leading clans came from Khorasan, the historical background for the transmission of the title is clear. This etymology also excludes the much-debated Uighur origin of the Khazars, and makes probable that the Qasar tribe

mentioned in the Chinese *Tang shu* (Hamilton 1955) joined the Uighurs late and came from the West. L. Bazin (1981–82) came to a somewhat different solution. In any case this reopened the way to the correct interpretation of the Turkic loanwords in Hungarian and many questions pertaining to the history of the Khazars.

3. *The Hungarian language as a source for the history of the Khazar language and people*

In the 1912 work of Gombocz we find 227 words which he claimed were of Old Turkic, or more precisely of Bulghar Turkic origin. The list itself is of high scholarly value. Nevertheless the progress achieved in the study of the history of the Turkic languages and the history of the Hungarian language respectively in the last 90 years (the list was ready in 1908) made a thorough revision necessary. I cannot go into details here, it is enough to mention that about 20% of the suggested etymologies turned out to be wrong, and almost all of them need revision. More important is that since then the list of loanwords has been almost doubled. The handlist that is the base for a forthcoming monograph on the Old Turkic loanwords of Hungarian (see now Berta-Róna-Tas 2002) contains about 450 words. In this respect Hungarian is the most extensive source for the language of the Khazars and the Bulghars. Of the pertinent questions I will mention only the problems of the source language, chronology and semantics.

There are two main candidates which could have served as the source language for the Old Turkic loanwords in Hungarian: Khazar and Onoghur-Bulghar. We see now that the question of the language of the Khazars is more complicated than was earlier thought. Not one but several languages were spoken in the Khazar Empire, but it seems to be very likely that the dominant language was an *r*-Turkic or Oguric language. The language of the Onoghur-Bulghars was also an *r*-Turkic language. In a few cases, however we can distinguish Khazar and Bulghar elements in Hungarian.

The periodization of the borrowing or copying is easier to determine. It began in the 6th century and the main influx of Old Turkic words ended around 800. It did not, however, cease. Some words may have been borrowed even in the 9th century. There are new results stemming from research on the language of the Avars who lived in the Carpathian Basin from 568 A.D. until the Conquest of the Magyars in 895. We

have now new data on the language of the early Avars that indicate that they, or at least one group of them spoke an Oghuric language. In 670–680 parts of the Bulghar groups joined the Avars and began to play an important role in the Avar Empire. The Franks in the first half of the 9th century defeated the Avar Khaganate and this speeded up the slavicisation of the population. At the time of the arrival of the Hungarians, in 895, great groups of the Avars were already bilingual Turko-Slavs. It became an interesting question: did the Hungarians borrow some of their Old Turkic loanwords already in the Carpathian Basin? In a few cases we have a positive answer.

The semantic range of the loanwords is very wide; words pertaining to animal husbandry, agriculture, horticulture, terms of political organisation, the terminology of social contacts, beliefs and other areas give a vivid picture of the everyday life of the Khazars and of Khazar-Hungarian contacts.

4. *Early contacts: Khazars and Magyars from the 5th to the 7th century*

When, in the 5th century A.D., the Turks appeared from the East, from the Kazakh steppe, the Hungarians lived in the southern part of the Urals and not in what is to-day Bashkiria as is claimed by some scholars. The change in their way of life was more gradual than was hitherto supposed. The change from an economy based on primitive agriculture and animal husbandry to a nomadic way of life was slow. In place of their earlier Iranian and Permian interaction, the Hungarians came into contact with new neighbours. Among them were also the ancestors, or some of the ancestors of the Khazars. At the end of the 6th or the very beginning of the 7th century the Hungarians moved southwest and occupied the place of those Bulghar groups which themselves left this region and settled in the region of the Donec—Dniestr—Bug rivers. In the Kuban—Don region the Hungarians came into contact with the Khazars who are first mentioned around 540 in the *Kârnâmag* ("The Deeds of Khosraw Anôshirwân," found in the Arabic translation of (Ibn) Miskawaih d. 1030, published by Grignaschi 1966) and in 555 in the Syriac geographical annex of the ecclesiastic history of Zakharias the Rhetor.

5. *The Bulgharia of Khuvrat, its new location and its defeat by the Khazar—Magyar coalition*

According to the Byzantine sources Khuvrat, the ruler of the Bulghars revolted against the Avars and proclaimed his independence in 635. Until recent times it was the common opinion (based mainly on the researches of Moravcsik 1930) that the Bulghar empire of Khuvrat was in the region of the river Kuban. This now has to be revised. The identification of the tomb of Khuvrat with his signet-ring by Werner (1984), a new interpretation of an interpolation in the Armenian geography of Ananias of Shirak (formerly quoted as Pseudo-Movsês Khorenac'i, now edited by Hewsen 1992), a reinterpretation of the works of Theophanes and Nicephorus, more precisely their common source, and an itinerary in the work of Constantine Porphyrogenitos (see Róna-Tas 2000:1–22), reveal that the Bulgharia of Khuvrat was around the Dnieper and not in the region of the Kuban river. This is of essential importance, because the history of the independent Khazar Emipre began in 670 when the Khazars, in alliance with the Hungarians, defeated the Bulghars. One group of the Bulghars moved to the Lower Danube and founded Danubian Bulgharia; another group found shelter among the Avars in the Carpathian Basin. Small groups appear in Dalmatia and even in Italy. One group under Bat Bayan withdrew to the north and slowly began to move to the northeast. Their descendants will appear later as the Volga Bulghars.

6. *The migration of the Magyars from the Kuban region to the Dnieper—Danube region or Etelköz: end of the 7th century*

The power of the Khazar Empire extended to the West after the defeat of the Bulghars. It reached the Crimean Peninsula and in a more or less tight way spread over the whole Pontic steppe. It had to be the political decision of the Khazar rulers that the Hungarians should move to the region evacuated by the Bulghars. The Hungarians slowly occupied the territory between the Dnieper and the Lower Danube. This is the land which was called by the Hungarians *Etelküzü* ("Mesopotamia") and which has been thoroughly described later by Constantine Porphyrogenitus. At the end of the 7th century the Hungarians defended the western borders of the Khazar Empire. The question of Levedia and Etelküzü produced a lively discussion in the Hungarian literature. Now

it is clear that we have to abandon the idea that Levedia was a place separate from Etelküzü. It was the headquarters of the Levedi-clan in the eastern part of Etelküzü, while the Almush-clan, the ancestors of the later Hungarian royal family, ruled over the western part.

7. *Khazar—Magyar political relations in the 8th–9th century*

During the first period of the life of the Hungarians in Etelküzü their relations with the Khazars was very close. Among other things this was reflected by the fact that the Hungarian chieftain was given a Khazarian wife. The very close connections can also be seen in the mirror of the Khazar loanwords of the Hungarian language.

About 800 A.D. the situation changed. Three rebellious Khazar tribes called the Khabars or Khavars left the Khazars and joined the Hungarian tribal confederation. If the Hungarians had been under heavy Khazar rule, it would have not made any sense to seek refuge among them. On the other hand it is certain that the Hungarians were not totally independent of the Khazars. A totally independent ruler on the steppe took the title *khagan*, and this was not the case with the Hungarians. In the *De administrando imperio* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus we come across an interesting story. It is related that sometime earlier the Khazar ruler wanted to promote Levedi, a Hungarian chieftain to become the first *arkhon* among the Hungarians. Levedi however refused the dignity and suggested offering it to the head of another clan, Almush or his son Árpád. This happened, and Árpád was selected and elected. This story, recorded from Hungarian visitors in Constantinople, was, for a long time, accepted at face value. I think, however, that this story is garbled. The Levedi clan, loyal to the Khazars was put aside, and the Almush clan took over as the leading power. This was presented as the "generosity" of Levedi. Nevertheless, the Khazar ruler formally recognized the change of power. The relationship between the Hungarians and Khazars in the 9th century was very similar to that of the relation between the Volga Bulghar ruler and the Khazars in the 10th century. After 800, Khazar sovereignty over the Hungarians was only formal.

8. *The role of the Khazar Empire in the formation of the Magyar tribal confederation: the Khavars. Did there exist a sacral kingship among the Magyars?*

In the first period, until about 800, Hungarian political organisation was essentially influenced by Khazar rule. After 800 the three newcomer Khavar tribes were united into one tribe and integrated as the eighth tribe into the union of the seven Hungarian tribes. The Khavars played an important role in the confederation. In about 842 the fortress of Sharkel was built most probably against the Hungarians. In 862 western sources already mention the incursion of the Hungarians into the territory of the Frankish Empire. Similar raids are known from the years 881, 892 and 894. Although the Khavars (*cowari*) are mentioned in the western annals only once (881, the Annals of Salzburg), it is almost certain that the Khavars played an important role in all of them. There exists a famous description of the Hungarians from the years around 870. Most probably it was a part of the second work of Ibn Khurdâdhbih (written about 885–886) but taken over by al-Jayhânî (worked between 913–941). This report has been transmitted to us in some of the later works, such as those of Ibn Rustah (writing in Arabic) and of the Persian author Gardêzî. According to this report, the Hungarians had a nominal ruler whose title was *künde* and an acting ruler, whom they obeyed in war and other matters: the *jila*. This system changed during the time of the conquest of the Carpathian Basin. Árpád became the ruler, he became *künde* and he was the acting ruler at the same time. Second to him was the *jila* and third in rank was the *karkha*. What transpired was similar to what took place with the coming to power of the the Carolingian dynasty. The major domo or the commander in chief took control. There is no trace of any sacral kingship among the Hungarians. Some scholars (following K. Czeglédy 1966, 1974) have claimed that the institution of sacral kingship existed among the Hungarians and was modelled on that of the Khazars. This cannot be maintained.

9. *Khazars, Pechenegs and Magyars: the Magyar Conquest of the Carpathian Basin in 895*

In 894, the Hungarians defeated the Danubian Bulghars. In the same year the Pechenegs, beaten by the Oguz, crossed the Volga and tried to break into Khazaria. This did not succeed. In 895, the Danube Bulghars

and the Pechenegs in a pincer operation defeated the Hungarians who left Etelküzü and occupied the eastern part of the Carpathian Basin. The Pechenegs occupied the Pontic steppe from the Don river to the Lower Danube. This changed the balance of power around Khazaria.

10. *Khazar—Magyar contacts in the 10th century: the correspondence of Ḥasdai ben Shaprût and King Joseph*

Did the Hungarians have any contact with the Khazars after the Conquest of 895? Some sources describe these contacts, which were of a commercial character. Byzantine sources relate that the Hungarians sent commercial envoys to the East, certainly to the Khazars and to those Hungarians who moved with the Bulghars to the Volga—Kama region. A group of Khwarezmians, who played an important role in the life of Khazaria in the 10th century, was also at home in Hungary. Hungarian sources record them as Khaliz. In the famous letter of Ḥasdai ben Shaprût to the Khazar king Joseph we read that the letter was to be sent through Jews who live in the country of the *Hungrin* i.e. the Hungarians. They forwarded the letter through Rûs and Bulghâr to the king of the Khazars.

11. *Summary*

The histories of the Hungarians and the Khazars are strongly interrelated. Linguistic sources are more ample on the Hungarian side until the end of the 9th century, from the second half of the 9th century also written sources help us to reconstruct Khazar-Hungarian relations. Nevertheless there are more open than solved questions, and the solution can be achieved only through a more thorough co-operation.

Bibliography

Altheim, F. (1959), *Geschichte der Hunnen*, Berlin.
Bazin, L. (1981–82), "Pour une nouvelle hypothèse sur l'origine des khazars," *Materialia Turcica* 7–8, 51–71.
Benkő, L. (Hrsg.) (1993–1994), *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Ungarischen* I–II, Budapest.

Berta, Á. – Róna-Tas, A. (2002), "Old Turkic Loan Words in Hungarian. Overview and Samples," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 43–67.
Czeglédy, K. (1966), "Das sakrale Königtum bei den Steppenvölkern," *Numen, International Review for the History of Religions* 13, 14–26.
—— (1974), "A szakrális királyság a steppei népeknél (a kazároknál és a magyaroknál)" [The sacral kingship among the nomadic peoples (the Khazars and the Magyars)], *Magyar Nyelv* 1970, 11–17.
Fodor, I. (1982), *In Search of a New Homeland, the Prehistory of the Hungarian People and the Conquest*, Budapest.
Göckenjan, H. – Zimonyi, I. (2001), *Orientalische Berichte über die Völker Osteuropas und Zentralasiens im Mittelalter. Die Ǧayhānī-Tradition.* Wiesbaden
Golden, P.B. (1980), *Khazar Studies. An historico-philological inquiry into the origins of the Khazars* I-II, Budapest.
—— (1992), *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, Wiesbaden.
Gombocz, Z. (1912), "Die bulgarisch-türkischen Lehnwörter in der ungarischen Sprache," *Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne* 30, Helsinki 1912, 1–252.
Grignaschi, M. (1969), "La Nihâyatu-l-ʿarab fī aḫbāri-l-Furs wa-l-ʿArab," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 22, 15–67.
—— (1972), "La Nihâyatu-l-ʿarab fī aḫbāri-l-Furs wa-l-ʿArab et les Siyaru mulûk-i-ʿãjam du Ps. Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 26, 83–184.
Hamilton, J.R. (1955), *Les Ouïghours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties, d'après les documents chinois*, Paris.
Hewsen, R.H. (1992), *The Geography of Ananias of Širak (Ašxarhacʿoycʿ). The Long and the Short Recensions*, Wiesbaden.
Kljashtornyj, S.G. (1983), "The Tariat (Terkhin) Inscription," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*. 36, 335–366.
—— (1985), "The Tes Inscription of the Uighur Bögü Khagan," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*. 39, 137–156.
Kokovcov, P.K. (1932), *Evrejsko-Khazarskaja perepiska v X veke*, Leningrad.
Kristó, Gy. (1996), *Hungarian history in the 9th century*, Szeged.
Ligeti, L. (1981), "The Khazarian Letter from Kiev and its attestation in Runiform Script," *Acta Linguistica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*. 31, 5–18.
—— (1986), *A magyar nyelv török kapcsolatai a honfoglalás előtt és az Árpád-korban* [The Turkic connections of the Hungarian language before the Conquest and in the age of the Árpáds], Budapest.
Ludwig, D. (1982), *Osteuropäische Geschichte. Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches im Licht der schriftlichen Quellen*, Münster.
Moravcsik, Gy. – Jenkins, R.J.H. (1967), Constantine Porphyrogenitus. *De Administrando Imperio* I–II, Dumbarton Oaks.
Róna-Tas, A. (1982), "A kazár népnévről" [On the ethnonym Khazar], *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* 84, 349–380.
—— (1983), "Újabb adatok a kazár népnév történetéhez" [New data on the history of the ethnonym Khazar], *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* 85, 126–133.
—— (1996a, 1997[2]), *A honfoglaló magyar nép. Bevezetés a korai magyar történelem ismeretébe* [The Magyars of the Conquest. An introduction into the ancient history of the Magyars], Budapest.
—— (1996b), "Ugor, ogur or ugur? Remarks on the name 'Finno-Ugrian'" in: Mészáros, E. [Ed.], *Ünnepi könyv Mikola Tibor tiszteletére* [Festive book in honour of Tibor Mikola], Szeged, 265–269.
—— (1996c), "An "Avar" word: *terem*" in: Berta, Á. – Brendemoen, B. – Schönig, C. [Eds], *Symbolae Turkologicae*, Uppsala 181–188.
—— (1998), "Western Old Turkic" in: Johanson, L. [Ed.] *The Mainz Meeting. Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Turkish Linguistics*, August 3–6, 1994, Wiesbaden, 619–626.

—— (1999), *Hungarians and Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, Budapest.
—— (2000), "Where was Khuvrat's Bulgharia?" *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 53, 1–22.
—— (2002), "Novye dannye k istorii étnonima 'khazar,'" in: *Hungaro-Rossica, Bjulleten (Newsletter), Rossijskaja Akademija nauk, Obščestvo Vostokovedov*, Moskva, 217–230.
—— (2005), "Turkic—Alanian—Hungarian contacts," *Acta Orientalia Hung.* 58, 205–213.
Senga, T. (1990), "The Toquz Oghuz Problem and the Origin of the Khazars," *Journal of Asian History* 24, 57–69.
Shinekhüü, M. (1980), *Orhon-Selengijn runi bičgijn šine dursgal*, Ulanbaatar.
Tekin, T. (1982), "The Tariat (Terkhin) Inscription," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*. 37, 43–86.
Werner, J. (1984), *Der Grabfund von Malaja Pereščepina und Kuvrat, Kagan der Bulgaren*, München.
Zimonyi, I. (2005), *Muszlim források a honfoglalás előtti magyarokról. A Ğayhānī-hagyomány magyar fejezete* [Muslim sources on the Hungarians before the Conquest. The Hungarian chapter of the Ğayhānī-tradition], Budapest 2005.

THE KHAZAR MOTIF IN JUDAH HALEVI'S *SEFER HA-KUZARI*

Eliezer Schweid

Judah Halevi's fascinating book, beloved of both scholars and laymen, may well have been the main source of the myth of the Jewish Khazars and its persistence from the twelfth century to the present.[1] It is only natural, therefore, that a collection of articles devoted to the Khazars should include a discussion of this motif in a book popularly named for the Khazar king. However, it should be pointed out at the start that Judah Halevi himself did not intend to develop that motif. On the contrary: for his own polemical purposes, he needed a story that had already been popularized as a historical fact.

Indeed, Judah Halevi's work originally had the rather unpoetic but apt title, *Kitâb al-ḥujja wa'l-dalîl fi naṣr al-dîn al-dhalîl* ("Book of Argument and Demonstration in Aid of the Despised Faith").[2] Moreover, he openly used the conversion of the Khazar king and his people merely as a calculated literary device. Judah Halevi learned the art of the philosophical dialogue, creating a didactic weave of dramatic plot and philosophical deliberation, from Plato.[3] Readers were told in advance that the "scholar" of the dialogue was a literary label for the author, and that, similarly, the King of the Khazars was essentially a literary representation of the active reader whom the author aims to convince.

On the other hand, in the opening passage of the literary framework, Judah Halevi states his reliance on "something I had once heard concerning the arguments of a Rabbi who sojourned with the King of the Khazars… about four hundred years ago."[4] He adds, moreover, further confirmation of his story, saying that, according to "historical records,"

---

[1] On the popularity and influence of *Sefer ha-Kuzari* among the Jews see Yehuda Even Shmuel's introduction to his Hebrew translation: *The Kosari of R. Yehuda Halevi* (Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1972), pp. 15–26. [In what follows, quotations will be cited, with slight modifications, from the English translation of Hartwig Hirschfeld (New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1946).]

[2] For the title see Even Shmuel, "General Remark on the Title of the Book" (Hebrew), *ibid*., p. 243.

[3] The imitation of the Platonic dialogue is particularly obvious in Part III, where Judah Halevi explicitly alludes to the structure of the debate in *The Republic*.

[4] Opening passage of *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, p. 31.

the King of the Khazars had become a convert to Judaism after consulting with three wise men—a Christian, a Muslim, and a Jew. It seems plausible that he made use of the letter from the Khazar king to R. Hasdai ibn Shaprut, which at the time made a tremendous impression on Spanish Jewish communities. However, prior to all these remarks, Judah Halevi explicitly declares that he had been inspired to write his book by a topical challenge: "I was asked to state what arguments and replies I could bring to bear against the attacks of philosophers and followers of other religions, and also against [Jewish] sectarians who attacked the rest of Israel."[5]

Given this declaration, the rather casual, obscure continuation, "This reminded me of something I had once heard concerning the arguments of a Rabbi,"[6] has an obvious meaning: it tells the reader that the story is a literary device. For a reason to be clarified presently, Halevi preferred to formulate his answers to the pressing questions that he had been asked, as if they were the very answers that had convinced the King of the Khazars to convert to Judaism some four hundred years before.

Halevi goes on to tell the story of the Khazar king and his conversion, but in a version adapted to his own needs: The king, described as a devout adherent of the Khazar religion, has a dream in which an angel appears to him. The apparition, portrayed as the king's reward for his religious devotion, is supposed to enhance his faith: he is told that, while his "intentions are acceptable," his actions are not. The king has the same dream three times, indicating that it was truly a prophetic dream. Understanding that he must determine which religion teaches the true path of worship, he calls first on a philosopher and, later, on three religious scholars, one after the other.[7] The literary details of the story reveal its precise, sophisticated features, cleverly designed to base the scholar's arguments on a firm foundation of direct religious experience—for without prior experience those arguments will not stand up to philosophical criticism, as I shall show below.

Now why did Judah Halevi prefer the story of the Khazar king to, say, a direct confrontation between a Jewish scholar, on the one hand, and his contemporary counterparts—a philosopher, a Christian, a Muslim, and a Karaite—in order to protect his Jewish readers (he was clearly thinking

[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Part I, 1–12 (pp. 31–39).

of them alone) against scornful attacks on their faith? In answer, I would point out, first, that for Judah Halevi, the story of the conversion of the Khazar king, inspired by a prophetic dream and a profound discussion with representatives of the different religions, was an incontrovertible historical fact. Second, just as he saw the king's prior religious experience as a vital element in the Jewish scholar's persuasive efforts, he considered the historicity of the conversion story as an indispensable tool in convincing his Jewish readers of the validity of his arguments.

To understand this assertion, one must consider the historical background of the interfaith polemic to which Judah Halevi was referring: power struggles between Christianity and Islam over the control of the Land of Israel, on the one hand, and of the Iberian Peninsula, on the other. These military and political power struggles played a decisive role in the aggressive confrontation between the two religions as they strove to expand their spheres of influence: Both Christians and Muslims saw in their own successes, coupled with their antagonists' defeat, clear proof of the truth of their faith, of the fact that God was fighting on their side; and both Christians and Muslims considered humiliation of the Jews—stubborn claimants for the title of the chosen people, holding fast to the Mosaic faith as the only true one—as palpable proof that God had abandoned his former nation to their fate. This argument undoubtedly had its effect on many Jews. The long, difficult exile began to undermine their faith; under such circumstances, the conversion to Judaism of a great, successful king like the King of Khazars, together with his whole nation, could be seen by the Jewish reader as demonstrating that, contrary to their enemies' claims, God had not deserted them in the historical conflict over the truth of their religion.[8]

It is worth considering Judah Halevi's use of the historicity of the Khazar story for his apologetic needs. A more simplistic historical approach would have simply pointed to the factuality of the event to prove that, despite the Exile, God had not forsaken his people, and that four hundred years previously the Jewish religion had enjoyed a highly significant success, on a par with the profane victories of Christianity and Islam. As Halevi was perfectly well aware, the mere fact that a nation of idolaters had converted to Judaism and thereupon prospered could not explain

[8] The King of the Khazars stresses repeatedly that the Christians and Muslims had "divided the inhabited world between them," so that their arguments justifying their religions were convincing, unlike those of the Jews (*ibid*., p. 34).

the wretched condition of the Jewish people, whose condition in Exile was not affected by that event. The Khazars' conversion and their political triumphs had not altered the situation of the Jews themselves.

The way in which Judah Halevi tells the story of the Khazars' conversion is worthy of attention in this connection. First, throughout the text of Part I, which describes the Jewish scholar's efforts to convince the king of the truth of Judaism, he also tries to prove two crucial statements: First, the Jewish religion is the only one intended from its very inception for the entire human race (hence also for the Khazars); it was passed down from one generation to the next, first by selected individuals, then by a selected family, and later by the entire chosen people, and it was destined, in a perhaps not very distant future, to be accepted by all the nations. Second, only in the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, only in the Land of Israel, and only in the holy tongue, Hebrew, could the supreme virtue achieved through observance of the precepts of the Torah—the unique, immediate, proximity to God—be revealed.

The King of the Khazars is thus informed that he must indeed undertake to observe the one faith originally intended for all nations, including his own, and study it in accordance with the testimony of the Jews; but even when he does so, he will never achieve the level of the descendants of the patriarchs, and will surely not be able to observe in his own kingdom those ritual precepts that depend on the land of Israel—though these precepts are, as the scholar tells him, the major means of achieving proximity to God. This statement indeed annoys the king when he hears it for the first time;[9] the scholar, unabashed, explains that the Jewish nation is unique for its super-human quality of possessing the "Divine essence" (Arabic: *al-'amr al-'ilāhi*), just as the human race is superior to all other living creatures in its possession of the "intelligent essence." Hence, just as no animal can become a human, members of other nations cannot become Jews in the full sense of the word, even if they accept the Torah and undertake to observe all the precepts that can be observed outside the Land of Israel.[10]

The king understands all this and accepts the situation; this is the basis for the next stages of the story of the Khazar conversion, as recounted in the opening section of Book 2:

---

[9] *Ibid*. 12 (p. 39).

[10] This is essentially the substance of the first and second parts of *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, beginning in the middle of Part I, *ibid*., pp. 51–118.

> After this the Khazari, as is related in the history of the Khazars, was anxious to reveal to his vizier in the mountains of Warsan the secret of his dream and its repetition, in which he was urged to seek the God-pleasing deed. The king and his vizier travelled to the deserted mountains on the sea shore, and arrived one night at a cave in which some Jews used to celebrate the Sabbath. They disclosed their identity to them, embraced their religion, were circumcised in the cave, and then returned to their country, eager to learn the Jewish law. They kept their conversion secret, however, until they found an opportunity of disclosing the fact gradually to a few of their special friends. When the number had increased, they made the affair public, and induced the rest of the Khazars to embrace the Jewish faith. They sent to various countries for scholars and books, and studied the Torah. Their chronicles also tell of their prosperity, how they beat their foes, conquered their lands, secured great treasures; how their army swelled to hundreds of thousands, how they loved their faith, and fostered such love for the Holy House that they erected a Tabernacle in the shape of that built by Moses. They also honored and cherished those born Israelites who lived among them.[11]

A striking point in this passage is Judah Halevi's reference to the "Chronicles of the Khazars," explicitly and emphatically placing the entire event in the context of *Khazar*, not Jewish, history. This is brought out in four ways: (i) The Jewish scholar has no part in the king's conversion to Judaism or that of his people. After the conversion, the scholar continues to act as the king's private tutor, but no more. (ii) The direct motive for the conversion is the second apparition of the angel to the Khazar king—a defining revelation for him and his people, which he obeys. (iii) The king and his vizier embrace the Jewish religion on their own initiative, and on their own responsibility; there is no imposed act of conversion in the sense of becoming part of the Jewish nation. The same holds true for the gradual conversion of all the Khazars. (iv) Even after embracing the Jewish religion, the Khazars do not consider themselves as Jews; and vice versa, the Jews involved in the story do not consider them as such. The Khazars indeed consider themselves fortunate to have Jews living among them, and they build themselves a model of the Sanctuary that Moses built in the wilderness (but not of the Temple in Jerusalem!). The Jews agree to teach the Khazars Torah, but the two nations still consider themselves as separate entities, of different origins, homelands, and languages, with all that entails, including the question of the quality and level of their religious faith.

[11] Part II, 1 (p. 72).

It is clear, at any rate, that Judah Halevi does not see the Khazar people's legendary military successes and riches as evidence of the Jewish people's material superiority; they in no way render Judaism more competitive in relation to Christianity and Islam, as far as earthly achievements are concerned. Neither can these successes compensate the Jews for their suffering; perhaps the very opposite: A Christian or Muslim debater might have argued that if the story, as told by Judah Halevi, were true, it would constitute a third historical proof that the ancient status of a Divinely chosen people had been transferred to a different nation!

Judah Halevi was thus aware of the trap and took care not to fall into it. On the contrary, from the very start he rejects the argument that earthly successes, such as military victories and political dominion, which stem from natural causes, unrelated to questions of religious faith and truth, may prove the justice of any religion. On the contrary, he believes that the very suffering of the Jews in Exile is the proof that their religion is the true faith, and that they are indeed worthy of their election.[12] In this context, the proof in Judaism's favor is not the existence of a flourishing kingdom that embraced the Jewish religion, but the fact that, despite the apparent superiority of the Christian and Muslim scholars, as representatives of ruling religions, and despite the Jews' wretched condition in Exile, this successful king preferred the "despised faith," having been convinced of its exclusive truth.

But Judah Halevi's concern with the historicity of the event goes still farther. Examining how his arguments continue, one realizes that, ultimately, he also intended to highlight the achievements of the Jewish religion in its efforts to gain acceptance among the nations of the world, competing in this regard with Christianity and Islam despite their considerable material advantages. Paradoxically, the argument continues, the earthly power of Christianity and Islam constitutes a weakness, while the earthly weakness of Judaism is its power. This implication of the "Khazar motif" clearly emerges from Judah Halevi's view of history and of God's place and leadership in history—especially with regard to the role played by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in spreading the Jewish religion throughout humanity. While Judah Halevi admits that the exile was a punishment for Israel's sins, it was also the channel through which Divine Providence announced the Kingdom of Heaven to humanity as a

[12] Part II, 30–45 (pp. 93–97).

whole. Christianity and Islam perform this function as well, albeit unintentionally; for in their claim to displace the chosen people, by falsely imitating the latter's laws, they prepare idolatrous peoples for recognition of the truth in the original faith, the foundation of their own.[13]

Looking at history from this angle, it is clear that Judah Halevi was also not indifferent to the status of the different religions in the world of the present. He was convinced that, ultimately, all the nations would recognize Israel as the chosen people, whose laws were Divine laws and whose God was the true God; for, as the prophet declared, "Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," and everything that happens in Jewish history, and in history in general, is designed to achieve that goal. The goal will not be achieved by physical power and coercion, but by all nations' recognition and acceptance of the truth.

In addition, the story at the end of the book, according to which the scholar immigrates to the Land of Israel[14]—an obvious allusion to the identity of the scholar and the author—proves that Judah Halevi expected the triumph of his people and his religion in the great historical struggle between nations and religions. The Kingdom of God would soon be revealed to the nations, and the advent of redemption was dependent solely on the Jews' performance of their role. Loyal to the Torah and its ultimate goal, they would rise up and, on their own initiative, return to their ancestral land in order to observe the special precepts that could not be observed elsewhere; they would not abandon the land to the devastation and ruin caused by the nations' struggle for its domination. For Judah Halevi, the opportunity was there: If the Jews emulated the Christians' and Muslims' efforts to dominate the Holy Land—unlike them, not by military conquest but by coming there, settling the land, and observing the precepts that could not be observed elsewhere—the messianic kingdom would be proclaimed, and the superiority of the Jews and of Judaism would be exhibited for all to see. It follows, therefore, that Judah Halevi also considered the Khazar king's and nation's conversion to Judaism as proof that the victory of the true religion over its rivals was imminent—not by force and coercion after the manner of the Christians and the Muslims, but by persuasive

[13] Part IV, 10–14 (pp. 190–194).
[14] Part V, concluding section (pp. 258–261).

means, based on the testimony of the Torah itself and of the nation that observed its precepts.

This seems to represent the full import of the "Khazar motif" in *Sefer ha-Kuzari* from the standpoint of its attitude to contemporary history. In what follows, I would like briefly to analyze the book's mode of thought and dialogic art, with a view to examining the significance of the motif from a literary and theoretical standpoint.[15]

The first obvious step in that direction is to complete our discussion of Judah Halevi's reasons for presenting his arguments in defense of the despised faith as a discourse between the scholar and the King of the Khazars, rather than a direct polemical dialogue between scholars of the respective religions and between them and the philosopher. Clearly, apart from the polemical advantage gained by describing the scholar's success and his triumph over the representatives of the other religions, Judah Halevi attached importance to the dialogic situation created by his chosen narrative frame—a situation that he considered ideal for the achievement of his educational aims.

In this context, attention should be drawn to two mutually complementary considerations. First, Judah Halevi was not interested in providing a literary arena for his opponents' arguments, beyond the minimum necessary space given them at the beginning of the book. Neither, for that matter, was he interested in trying to convince them; he knew very well that there was no chance of that. He was writing for his coreligionists only. He was intent on convincing them in order to encourage them, resolve their doubts, and persuade them to immigrate to their homeland. To that end, he would have to inform—or remind—his Jewish readers of things that they should have known as well as he; to re-instruct them in the truth of their own Torah and the truth of the revelatory experiences of their faith. This in turn required throwing new light on traditional religious truth, illuminating the cultural and historical condition that was the root of their affliction and their doubts. An ideal educational and literary tool to that effect was the presentation of the Jewish religion to an outsider, who would be learning that truth for the first time with the positive intention of properly understanding it, but nevertheless in a completely objective manner.

---

[15] For a detailed analysis of the structure of the dialogue in *Sefer ha-Kuzari* and its relationship with Judah Halevi's apologetic methods see my article, "The Art of Dialogue in *Sefer ha-Kuzari* and Its Theoretical Significance" (Hebrew), in Eliezer Schweid, *Feeling and Speculation* (Hebrew; Ramat-Gan, 1970), pp. 37–80.

Second, a major problem in any apologetic argument with representatives of opposing religions is to find a conceptual common denominator, on the basis of which the disputants can present their arguments with a view to "winning," that is, to convincing one another of the justice of their claims. Put differently, how can it be decided objectively which of the disputants has proved his case? Medieval religious and interreligious debates were able to invoke such a common denominator—the universal substrate of the civilization of which all three religions were a part, namely, the scientific-philosophical substrate. Even theologians who denied the legitimacy of applying philosophical considerations to revelatory religion employed the language of philosophy in their attempts to reject theological arguments of other faiths or other divisions within their own faith; this was particularly true of Jewish theologians drawn into enforced polemics. The result, however, was that they were obliged to admit the superiority of philosophy over theology, thus falling into a trap of their own making, since the polemic between the various religions and philosophy was no less critical than interfaith polemics.

Judah Halevi's fascinatingly sophisticated approach to apologetics is particularly evident in this respect. He too makes use of the rational, objective, language of philosophy in order to validate (or invalidate) the arguments of revelatory religion; however, while at the empirical, scientific level he accepts the validity of the philosophical argument, at the polemical level he treats the philosopher as a metaphysician. Thus the philosopher, required to justify his own attitude to revelation, can no longer play an adjudicatory role in relation to religion itself.

Who, then, would be the judge? Judah Halevi's simple solution was to appoint his readers as judges, mobilizing their intellectual and experiential resources for the purpose; as a skilled educator, he knew how to point his readers toward these resources and guide their application of them. This was precisely the pedagogical role assigned to the Khazar king—a model pupil, as a counterpart to the model teacher—the scholar.

All the king's qualities as portrayed in the text contribute to that goal. His claim to objectivity is based not on the philosophy as a metaphysical discipline, but only on his commonsense and intellectual honesty, his critical attitude to both his own and other's arguments. But it is also based on the fact that the king was not originally a party to the dispute and entered into it only because of his own personal motivation—to determine which of the representatives of the three religions could legitimate his reliance on revelation. Above all, the king represents the kind of people who, though not educated in a revelatory religion, possess by

virtue of their motivation the experiential and intellectual tools necessary to distinguish a valid religious argument, rooted in a true revelation, from an invalid argument, invoking a false revelation.

Thus, the Khazar king—an objective judge, profoundly motivated by his dream to discover religious truth—is the ideal educational solution. This becomes evident upon studying the way in which Judah Halevi shaped the man's character against the background of his imaginary biography: a talented, successful king, that is, a person conversant with profane matters, practical and experienced, eminently sensible and capable of objective judgment. He is moreover a believer, a pious person with high moral principles, and, above all, intellectually honest, with a critical attitude even to himself, driven by his desire to discover the truth.

In sum, the Khazar king is portrayed from the start as an objective party, a seeker of truth for its own sake. He is not educationally disposed toward Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or philosophy. He indeed entertains certain prejudices or, more precisely, is inclined to such prejudices, which first come to light when he summons the philosopher as his first discussant, despite the fact that the angel in his dream specifically commanded him to consult religious scholars. His prejudices are featured again when he decides not to consult a Jewish scholar, in view of their inferior condition in comparison with Christians and Muslims. These are clearly typical prejudices of a king, anchored in secular knowledge. On the other hand, they are natural errors of judgment, based on a rationally critical attitude. Indeed, it is the king's rationality that inspires him first to turn to the philosopher for criteria with which to evaluate religions, and his rationality is behind his view that the Jews' lowly state implies the inferiority of their religion. Nevertheless, he is clearly not prejudiced in relation to philosophy *per se* or the religions themselves, since up to that time he had taken no interest in them and knew nothing about them.

All this, however, was not sufficient in Judah Halevi's view to empower the Khazar king to judge issues of faith and ritual. He could not evaluate the truth of a revelatory religion unless he himself had previously experienced some kind of religious revelation, which had in fact driven him to investigate questions relating to human worship of God. This, of course, explains the device of the king's prophetic dream. The king's motivation for his inquiry into religious truth is rooted not in scientific curiosity, but in a fervent religious sense, which is rewarded by a prophetic revelation—not actual prophecy, for that was the perquisite of the Jews in their own land when the Temple was still standing.

In sum: it was this combination of attributes that gives the king the ability—and authority—for a critical evaluation of philosophy and the religions, and subsequently of the individual religions, while diligently seeking to learn the truth to be learnt from each; for there is some measure of truth in each of philosophy, Christianity, and Islam, and it is the combination of their respective truths that finally leads the king to the truth of their source and fount, namely, the Jewish Torah.

The qualities with which Judah Halevi endowed the Khazar king shape, therefore, not only the literary framework in its endeavor to illuminate the depths of the Jewish faith and its significance for humanity, but also the lively, dialogic nature of the text, which is quite rare in medieval dialogic literature. He has created a real drama, with all the tension of a real-life debate and argument. The king's qualities reflect not only different aspects of religious truth, but also personal traits and life experiences of a variety of religious personalities. While these qualities are particularly evident in the first sections of Part I, they are present throughout the book. In fact, it is the king's character that has attracted readers to this literary masterpiece down to the present time—a lively, finely drawn figure, but nevertheless open, evolving, and maturing, both as a monarch and as a believer.[16]

It is readily seen that the qualities of the Khazar king in *Sefer ha-Kuzari* originated in Judah Halevi's own personality. At the beginning of this article I noted that the Scholar is the author's literary counterpart; we may now argue that the Khazar king also represents an important side of Judah Halevi's character. The two figures complement one another as they evolve side by side, for by the time the book ends, the reader realizes that, just as the king has learnt from the Scholar, the latter has learnt from the king. The king, through his integrity and consistency, has essentially led the Scholar to his own decision to draw the logical conclusions from his own teachings and immigrate to the Land of Israel. Thus, while teaching his royal pupil the essentials of his faith, the Scholar has taught himself, *through* his pupil, to understand the profound implications of his commitment to practical observance of the Torah.[17]

Of course, Judah Halevi's intention in the brilliant literary portrayal of his protagonists and shaping of the plot was not a personal one. The

[16] For a detailed analysis see my article cited in n. 15.
[17] See the concluding section of the book (above, n. 14).

two characters, king and Scholar, were designed as models for his Jewish readers, whose doubts and questions had inspired him to write the work. His readers were to identify with both partners to the debate: Like the Khazar king, they should remember the prophetic "dream" that every Jew may have by virtue of his inherent prophetic abilities. This would help them, having been reared and educated as members of the Jewish nation, to mobilize all the resources of their intellect and their personal and historical experience, and thereby to revitalize their weakened belief in revelation. Ultimately, they would draw the inevitable conclusion reached by the Scholar after he had successfully brought his pupil to the level of his own religious *persona* at the start of their dialogue: They would set out for their own homeland, there to be redeemed.

In sum: Judah Halevi created the characters of the Khazar king and the Jewish Scholar in *Sefer ha-Kuzari* as a representative model of the educational process necessary to shape a good Jew, a Jew capable of openly and critically facing the vicissitudes of his own time, overcoming them, and emerging from them as a sincere believer. *Sefer ha-Kuzari* thus expresses the absorption of the Khazar myth into the Jews' self-awareness.

IRANIAN SOURCES ON THE KHAZARS

Dan D.Y. Shapira

1.0 In the following, three groups of sources dealing with Khazar history are surveyed. What is common to these sources is their Iranian provenance. The sources can be divided into three groups according to the three languages in which they are recorded: Middle Persian (or Pahlavi); Arabic; New Persian. This division reflects not only the language of the texts, but also, to some extent, their historical value as sources belonging to a certain cultural and temporal milieu. Some of the sources in Arabic are supposed to reflect Pahlavi originals now lost, while those in New Persian, in almost all cases, go back to Arabic originals (some of them being reworking of older Pahlavi material). There are sources in other Iranian languages, such as Sogdian or Saka-Khotanese, but they contain data on Ancient Turks and have no direct bearing on Khazar studies in the strict sense.

1.1 The Khazars are still believed by some scholars to have appeared on the historical stage first in the last decades of the Sasanian dynasty in Persia, as an ally of Iran's foes.[1] Shortly after Heraclius delivered a mortal blow to Iran, new enemies sprang up from the Arabian desert and conquered Iran within a few years. Zoroastrian Iran thus ceased to exist, and a new period in the long history of this country began, a period which is characterized by an adaptation of Islam to the patterns of Iranian civilization, and by a profound Iranization of Islam as a whole. The first centuries of Islamic rule in Iran brought about interesting developments in pre-Islamic Iranian literary traditions, developments which are generally seen within the framework of the *Šuʿūbīya* trends; we still cannot appreciate with precision the very complicated mechanism of these cultural changes, but in a schematized way, they can be described as a double-track development: on the one hand, absorption of Iranian

[1] However, one should stress that during this period, Khazars cannot be yet discernible from other Western Turks, the so-called *Türküt*s. Compare now C. Zuckerman's contribution in this volume; cf. also my own second contribution here.

traditions into the so-called "Islamic lore", *i.e.*, into the newly-emerging civilization united by Arabic language, Arabic script, and, to some extent, by Islam; on the other hand, there was a parallel development, namely, reshaping and consolidation of pre-Islamic Iranian traditions within the community of faithful Zoroastrian believers, which became, in the course of time, an oppressed minority in their own country.

1.2 It should be stressed that historical and geographical lore preserved in the traditional literary language of Sasanian Iran, Middle Persian, was recorded in the form which came down to us only during the first Islamic centuries; we may be quite certain that during the first formative centuries of Islamic rule, Zoroastrians formulated anew their self-awareness, so the historical and geographical material of our extant Pahlavi sources, though valuable, should be treated with caution.[2]

1.3 The same applies also to the "Sasanian" material preserved in Arabic sources; though authors writing in Arabic possessed an impressive body of information about pre-Islamic Iran, most of which is generally held to go back to the Sasanian Book of Kings (being thus translated into Arabic[3] in the early Islamic Period), it should be nevertheless remembered that the date, origin and authenticity of such material should be closely scrutinized in each case separately.

1.4 As to the sources in New Persian, they are much later than those in Arabic, and as a rule, they rework earlier Arabic material.

2.1 To the first group of our sources, those in Zoroastrian Middle Persian, belong a few interesting pieces of information. This is how *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* (12.8–9,15),[4] a composition of (partly) geographical character, describes Turkestān:

*Turkestān wuzurg gyāg ud hamāg sard, wēšag bawēd, u-šān draxt ī barwar ud mēwag ī x^{v}arišnīg ud *any ciš nihang. hast az awēšān kē Māh*

[2] Cf. now D. Shapira, "Was there Geographical Science in Sasanian Iran?," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae*, 54 (2–3), 2001, pp. 319–338; D. Shapira, "Zoroastrian Sources on Black People," *Arabica*, XLIX, 1 (Paris 2002), pp. 117–122.

[3] In Arabic, *Siyar-al-mulūk*.

[4] Cf. G. Messina, *Libro apocalittico persiano Ayātkār ī Žāmāspīk*, Biblica et Orientalia 9, Roma 1939.

paristēnd ud hast kē jādūg hēnd, ud hast ī Weh-Dēn hēnd.... warz ī ābādānīh kunēnd. ka mīrēnd ō wēšag abganēnd, ud hast ī ō Wahišt ud hast ī ō Dušax^{v} ud Hamēstagān šawēnd,

"Turkestān is a vast place and all of it is cold, it is forests, they have few fruit-trees and edible fruits and [other edible] things. There are some among them who worship the Moon and there are some who are sorcerers, and there are some who are of the Good Religion.... They till the land. When they die, they throw (their dead) in forests, and there are some who go to Paradise, and there are some who go to Hell and the Middle Abode (Purgatory)."[5]

The reader of the descriptions of the Turkic peoples made by Muslim geographers, *e.g.*, by Gardīzī[6] or Marwāzī,[7] would find these passages familiar. I think it is clear from this Zoroastrian description that neither Eastern Turkestan is meant, nor the Khazar possessions on the lower course of the Volga, or Don, or in the Northern Caucasus. Though in the classical Pahlavi passages the term "Turkestan" does refer to the land of the Uigurs, here it applies rather to a country in the steppe-forest areas, probably in the present-day Tatarstan/Bašqortostan. The term "Turk" seems to me to be used here not in its generic meaning, but as a general term for the northern semi-nomads, perhaps similar to its application by some Muslim and Byzantine sources to the [proto-] Magyars. The reference to forests and corpse-exposure to reminiscent of the description of the Volga tribes by Ibn Faḍlān;[8] the people living in "Turkestan" as described here were certainly not Muslims yet, and the reference to the "Good Religion" (which is Pahlavi for Zoroastrianism) as confessed by some "Turks" needs to be explained: in numerous Arabic and Muslim New-Persian texts, the term "*majūsī*" does mean not "Zoroastrian," but

[5] A slightly different translation in D. Shapira, "Was there Geographical Science in Sasanian Iran?," p. 334.

[6] Cf. Martinez, A.P., "Gardīzī's two Chapters on the Turks," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* II, 1983, pp. 109–218.

[7] *Ca.* 1120. See V. Minorsky, *Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marvazī on China, the Turks and India. Arabic text (circa A.D. 1120) with an English translation and commentary*, James G. Forlong Fund Vol. XXII, The Royal Asiatic Society, London 1942, p. 92 ff.

[8] See A.Z.V. Togan, *Ibn Faḍlān's Reisebericht*, Abh. KM XXIV/3, Leipzig 1939; A.P. Kovalevskij, *Kniga Axmeda ibn Fadlana o jego putešestvii na Volgu v 921–922 gg.*, Kharʹkov 1956. *Non vidi*: J.E. McKeithen, *The Risālah of Ibn Faḍlān: An Annotated Translation with Introduction*, Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University 1979.

rather "dualist," thus frequently Manichaean, or merely "fire-worshipper," and some Turkic peoples, like the Patzinaks (Pechenegs), are said to be "majūsī;" in the sense of "fire-worshipper" the term was applied, *e.g.*, to the Rus', because of their funeral rites.

We have an example of such a reference to Khazars, too: ca. 1094, the Spaniard al-Bakrī, the older contemporary of Judah Halevi, noted that the king of the Khazars was previously a "majūsī;"[9] I do not think that in that last case the word means anything else but "pagan," certainly not "Zoroastrian."[10]

So, as to our Pahlavi passage, we should assume that the Zoroastrian compiler drew upon a Muslim text in which he found "majūsī," used by the Muslim author in the sense of "pagan," but our compiler erroneously interpreted it as "of *the* Good Religion," *i.e.*, belonging to his own Zoroastrian community.

2.2 Another example of a post-Sasanian Zoroastrian passage in Pahlavi drawing upon Muslim sources was published by de Menasce,[11] and Peter Golden[12] called attention to it for Khazar studies:

…čiyōn kēš ī Yīšō ī az Hrōm ud hān ī Mōšē az-iz Xazarān ud hān ī Mānī az-iz Turkestān tagīgīh ud čērīh īšān pēš būd bē burd ō wadagīh ud ōbastagīh andar hamahlān abgand, hān ī Mānī az Hrōm filsō[k]fāyīh-iz anāft,[13]

"…just like the faith of Jesus from Byzantium, and the faith of Moses from the Khazars, and the faith of Mani from the Uigurs took away the strength and the vigor that they had previously possessed, threw them

[9] A.A. Kunik & b. V. Rozen (ed.), *Izvestija al-Bekri i drugix avtorov o Rusi i slavjanax* 1–2, St. Peterburg 1878, p. 44 l. 2.

[10] Compare P.B. Golden, "Khazaria and Judaism," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 4 (1983), pp. 126–156, p. 142.

[11] Cf. P.P.-J. de Menasce, O. P., *Škand-Gumānīk Vičār, La solution decisive des doutes*, Fribourg en Suisse 1945, pp. 239–40; M. Molé, *La Légende de Zoroastre selon les Textes Pehlevis*, Travaux de l'Institut d'Études Iraniennes de l'Université de Paris 3, ed. J. de Menasce, Paris 1967, p. 237.

[12] Golden, "Khazaria and Judaism," p. 140 n. 38.

[13] D.M. Madan, *The Complete Text of the Pahlavi Denkard, Published by "The Society for the Promotion of Researches into the Zoroastrian Religion" under the supervision of D.M. Madan*, Bombay 1911, vol. I, p. 25 l. 15–19. Cf. also D. Shapira, "Was there Geographical Science in Sasanian Iran?," p. 327 n. 66.

into vileness and decadence amongst their rivals, and the faith of Mani even frustrated the Byzantine philosophy."

Golden correctly observed that this passage is one of the few of the non-Muslim sources to make note of Khazar Judaism. However, this Zoroastrian passage can be approximately dated: it states that the result of the adoption of Judaism and Manichaeism by Khazars and Uigurs was the cause of the decadence of their countries, and thus this passage was recorded after both Jewish Khazar and Manichaean Uigur Qaganates were weakened or even destroyed, *i.e.*, about the second half of the tenth century.[14] In addition, it is unlikely that this Zoroastrian testimony of the Khazar Judaism is first-hand;[15] it was rather channeled through Muslim literature, and in this case, this is, indeed, a valuable piece of evidence for the Zoroastrian-Muslim literary intercourse in Iranian lands (but nothing more). Zoroastrian interest in states where Judaism and Manichaeism were professed is understandable against the Zoroastrian religious background, as Manichaeism was a religion seen by Zoroastrians as an abominable distortion of their own teaching, a form of Iranian heresy *par excellence*, and Judaism represented for them those destructive Monotheistic teachings which had resulted in Christianity and, especially, in Islam.[16]

---

[14] The Uigur Qagan was converted in 762; in 840, the Uigurs were defeated by the Qirghiz, but Manichaeism remained the religion of the royal court in Khocho well until the middle of the tenth century, when it was gradually replaced by Buddhism. The Imperial Turks, or Qaraxanids, converted to Islam ca. 960. It was not infrequently noted by various scholars that the dates of adoption of Judaism and Manichaeism by, respectively, Khazars and Uigurs, and the dates of the fall of their Qaganates are fairly close to each other. However, only the second part of this statement holds water. Cf. now D.D.Y. Shapira, "Judaization of Central Asian Traditions as Reflected in the so-called Jewish-Khazar Correspondence, with Two Excurses: A. Judah Halevy's Quotations; B. Eldad Ha-Dani", *Khazars*, ed. V. Petrukhin, W. Moskovich, A. Fedorchuk, A. Kulik, D. Shapira (Jews and Slavs, vol. 16), Jerusalem: Gesharim–Moscow: Mosty Kul'tury 2004, pp. 503–521; *idem*., "Bulgar-Khazar Rivalry: Notes on Ethnical Historio-Psychology (Judaeo-Turkica VII"), *Khazarskij Almanakh* Vol. I (Proceedings of the Third International Khazar Colloquium), Kharkiw 2002, pp. 214–224.

[15] We do have, however, an attestation of an interesting encounter in the former land of the Khazars between a Zoroastrian and a Jew (the Karaite collector, A. Firkowicz, (wrongly) claimed to be responsible for the creation of the so-called "Khazar theory"). But this took place in the thirties of the 19th century, see D. Shapira, "A Karaite from Wohlynia Meets a Zoroastrian from Baku", *Iran & Caucasus V, Research Papers from the Caucasian Centre for Iranian Studies*, Yerevan & Tehran, edited by Garnik Asatrian, Teheran 2001, pp. 105–6.

[16] On Zoroastrian attitudes to Judaism, cf. Sh. Shaked, "Zoroastrian Polemics against

2.3 There is a passage in the Middle Persian apocalyptic work entitled *Zand ī Wahman Yašt* (or *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, henceforth ZWY)[17] 4.58, in which the name of Khazars was supposed to occur in a list of foreign nations who sought to destroy Iran. This passage describes the period which can be approximately dated as reflecting the events associated with the activities of Wahrām ī Čōbēn, the famous Sasanian general, who in 588 (or 589?) crossed the Oxus and killed the Turkic king; after his victory, Wahrām was sent by Hurmizd IV to the Caucasus to repel the invading nomads, sometimes identified by much later sources with Khazars. This presumably Khazar invasion was taken as having been referred to already in the X^{v}adāy Nāmag, the Sasanian "Book of Kings."[18] Wahrām ī Čōbēn was successful at his mission and opened hostilities against the Byzantines in Georgia.[19] But when, after his defeat on the banks of the Araxes, Hurmizd IV decided to remove him, then Wahrām answered with a revolt, usurped the throne and became, for a short period of time, the King of Kings (590–591); in the civil war which followed, neighbors of Iran took vital part. This is the short epoch when wars were waged almost simultaneously with Turks, Byzantines, (still pagan and Christian) Arabs and other peoples.[20]

The reference to "Khazars" must nevertheless be regarded as an anachronism, for it seems that no Khazars were yet around to invade Iran. As to our problematic word in ZWY 4.58, two different emendations of it were suggested by Bailey: one, to ḤPTL, "Hephthalites",[21] another,

---

Jews in the Sassanian and Early Islamic Period," *Irano-Judaica* II, ed. by Sh. Shaked and A. Netzer, Jerusalem 1990, pp. 85–104.

[17] C. Cereti, *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn. A Zoroastrian Apocalypse*, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Serie Orientale Roma fondata da Giuseppe Tucci diretta da Gherardo Gnoli Vol. LXXV, Roma 1995.

[18] Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabari übersetz und mit ausführlichen Erläuterungen und Ergänzungen versehn*, Leiden 1879, p. 270 (*Taḏjārib al-ʾUmam* i, p. 219.7, by Ibn Miskaweih, who until 912 based himself on Ṭabarī); see K. Czeglédy, "Bahrām Čōbīn," *Antik Tanulmányok* IV (1957), pp. 301–2; K. Czeglédy, "Bahrām Čōbīn and the Persian Apocalyptic Tradition," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae* 3 (1958), pp. 21–43; M. Bíró, "Bahrām Čōbīn and the Establishment of the Principality in Kartli," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae* 33.2 (1979), pp. 177–185, p. 177.

[19] On his activities in Georgia, cf. Bíró 1979.

[20] The passage in ZWY 4.58 enumerates, among others: Hyonites, Turks, Khazars (?), Tibetans (?), Indians, Mountaineers (?), Chinese (or, inhabitants of Central Asia), Kābulis, Sogdians, Byzantines, . . . ; it is impossible here to discuss the complicated problems involving these ethnic names. Cf. n. 55 below.

[21] H.W. Bailey, "Iranian Studies I", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies (University of London)* 6 (1930–32), pp. 945–955, p. 946.

to ḤǦL, "Khazars".[22] Later, this view was modified by Henning and by Bailey himself,[23] and the most recent editor of ZWY, Carlo Cereti, read the word in question *Xadur,*[24] which stands, as he thinks, for Khazars, though he seems not to be aware of the chronological problem involved in a reference to Khazars in the end of the 6th century.[25]

It is known that the interpretation of graphical forms of Pahlavi words poses much difficulty. I do not exclude the possibility that the word in question in ZWY is indeed "Khazar." However, there are examples of Pahlavi historical and pseudo-historical writings which contain passages that could be dated with precision. In most cases the dates reflect knowledge of the events of the last great Byzantine-Sasanian war,[26] one of the episodes of which was a real Western Türkic invasion (later ascribed to the Khazars), and the developments which followed it, *i.e.*, several decades after the date of our ZWY passage. So, it could be argued with plausibility that our problematic *"Khazars"-word was inserted back into the text of the Xᵛadāy Nāmag anachronistically, at the latest stages of the redaction of the text in the last decades of the existence of the Sasanian Empire (or even later), referring thus to the events under Husraw I Anōšurwān (531–579), the namesake of Husraw II Parwēz (591–628).[27]

---

[22] H.W. Bailey, "Caucasica," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1943), pp. 1–5, p. 1 ff.

[23] W.B. Henning, "A Farewell to the Khagan of the Aq-Aqatäran," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London)* 14.3 (1952), pp. 501–522 (= *Acta Iranica* 15, *W.B. Henning Selected Papers* II, Liége 1977, pp. 387–408), p. 505 n. 2; H.W. Bailey, "Hārahunā," *Asiatica. Festschrift Friedrich Weller. Zum 65 Geburtstag gewidmet von seinen Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern*, Leipzig 1954, pp. 12–21, p. 21.

[24] Cf. the comments in Cereti, *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, p. 192.

[25] In fact, the chronological problem with which Cereti was preoccupied is that of the dating of ZWY itself, and he noted that in if one accepts the reading "Khazars," the composition cannot be dated before the Late Sasanian period.

[26] I hope I was successful in demonstrating this in my PhD thesis *Studies in Zoroastrian Exegesis: Zand* (Jerusalem 1998), Ch. IV ("Mythologization of History and Political Use of *Zand*").

[27] As it was observed that under this latter king much new material was added to the Sasanian Book of the Kings, see Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, p. xv ff.; Th. Nöldeke, "Das Iranische Nationalepos," *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie* II, Strassburg 1904, 130–211, p. 12 ff. On the reforms of Husraw I, cf. now Z. Rubin, "The Reforms of Khusro Anushirwan," *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, III: *States, Resources and Armies* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, I), ed. A. Cameron (Princeton, New Jersey 1995), pp. 227–297.

3.1 The second group of Iranian sources comprises texts extant actually in Arabic, not in Persian; we are interested here only in the texts in Arabic which describe the Khazar-Iranian relations before Islam. These texts are generally held to go back, mostly, to the Sasanian Book of Kings, being thus translated into Arabic in the early Islamic Period. The following questions arise: how authentic is their information? Even more importantly, can mention made of the Khazars at such an early period be viewed as anything but anachronistic? Were they derived from the pre-Islamic Sasanian tradition, whether legendary or not, or were they derived from a source (or sources) written in Arabic much later?

3.2 As Dunlop observed, "the material in the Arabic and Persian writers with regard to the Khazars in early times falls roughly into three groups, centering respectively round the names of (a) one or other of the Hebrew patriarchs, (b) Alexander the Great, and (c) certain of the Sassanid kings, especially Anūšurwān and his immediate successors."[28] The first two categories are, naturally, of legendary character;[29] does the third one contain some genuine historical traditions?

3.3 The references to Khazars as active already before Islam appear in Arabic sources (partly derived, presumably, from the Xʷadāy-Nāmag) composed in the second half of the ninth century, *i.e.*, about a century after Ibn Muqaffaʿ, Muḥammad bin Djahm and others rendered the Sasanian Book of Kings from Pahlavi into Arabic. To such sources belongs, *e.g.*, the work by al-Dīnawarī (died 895 C.E.), *Kitāb al-ʾAkhbār al-Ṭiwal*, according to which Khazars were playing a role of prominence in the Caucasus as early as the sixth century, or *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān* by al-Balādhurī (died 892),[30] who reports about the Khazar-Sasanian relations, or the *History* by al-Ṭabarī (838–932), in which the name of

[28] D.M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton University Press 1954, p. 12.

[29] The first one is clearly of the non-Zoroastrian provenance, and as such, could have been hardly derived from the Sasanian Book of Kings.

[30] *Liber expugnantionis regionum, auctore Imâmo Ahmed ibn Jahja ibn Djâbir al-Belâdsorî, quem e codice Leidensi et codice Musei Britannici edidit M.J. de Goeje*, pars prior, Lugduni Batavorum 1895 (reprint: 1965; also ed. R.M. Raḍwān, al-Qāhira 1959); translation: Ph.Kh. Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State, Being a Translation from the Arabic Accompanied with Annotations, Geographic and Historic Notes of the Kitâb Futûh al-Buldân of al-Imâm abu-lʿAbbâs Ahmad ibn-Jâbir al-Balâdhuri*, Vol. I, Studies in History, Economical and Public Law, Edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University Volume LXVIII [Whole Number 163], New York 1916.

the Khazars[31] is a substitution for "Turks",[32] and they are said to hold an important position in the epoch of Husraw I Anōšurwān, or *Kitāb al-Kharāj wa Ṣanʿat al-Kitāba*,[33] written in the twenties of the tenth century by Qudāma ibn Jaʿfar, where Khazars appear, again, under Husraw I.

3.4 In these sources, we have numerous references to the epoch of Husraw I Anōšurwān, who is said to deceive the Khazar Qagan,[34] to subjugate the kings of the Caucasus,[35] and to build the walls of Darband; Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadānī (early 10th century),[36] whose information might go back to the X^{v}adāy-Nāmag (quoted as *Akhbār al-Furs*) ascribed to Anōšurwān the building of the most important Khazar cities, like Balanjar, Samandar, Xazarān; a similar tradition is known from Balādhurī and Ṭabarī, and later, from the local Caspian chronicles (cf. below, § 4.4). We are told that ambassadors from the Chinese, the Turks, and the Khazars were constantly at Husraw's gate;[37] the same king kept three thrones of gold in his palace, reserved for the kings of Byzantium, China and the Khazars,[38] and according to Ibn-Khurdādhbih,[39] persons wishing access to the Persian court from the country of the Khazars and the Alāns were detained at Bāb al-Abwāb.[40]

---

[31] *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed Ibn Djarir at-Tabari cum aliis edidit M.J. de Goeje*, Leiden, vol. I, pp. 229.11; 609.11; 699.1; 840.15; 841.5; 894.6–9; 898.15; 899.3–11 (cf. also Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-Ṭabarī. Taʾrīkh al-Rusul wa-'l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, al-Qāhira 1967–69). Partial German translation: Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*. Complete English translation in the voluminous *The History of a-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh al-Rusul wa'l-mulūk*), ed. by Moshe Perelmann, Bibliotheca Persica, Edited by Ehsan Yar-Shater, New York and Los Angeles.

[32] Such anachronistic enrichment of the old history and modeling it on the recent events and features was dubbed by Shahbazi (A. Sh. Shahbazi, "On the *X^{w}adāy-Nāmag*," *Acta Iranica* 30 (1990), pp. 208–229, p. 21 ff.) *the Ctesian method*.

[33] Excerpts edited in M.J. de Goeje, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik (Liber viarum et regnorum) auctore Abu'l-Kāsim Obaidallah ibn Abdallah Ibn Khordādhbeh et excerpta e Kitāb al-Kharādj auctore Kodāma ibn Djaʿfar*…, B.G.A. VI, Leiden 1889.

[34] Qudāmah, p. 259 ff., quoted by Yāqūt (*Muʿjam al-Buldān*, ed. F. von Wüstenfeld, Leipzig 1866–73, s.v. Bāb al-Abwāb).

[35] And they paid him tribute, *'twt*, Balādhurī, p. 197; cf. T.M. Sipenkova, "O nalogovoj terminologii al-Balazuri," *Palestinskij Sbornik* 15 (78), 1966, pp. 148–154, p. 150. Can this Arabic word *'twt* be a wrong popular translation of Persian *āyaft*, as if from *āy-*?

[36] *Compendium libri / Kitāb al-Boldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden 1885.

[37] Ṭabarī, I, 899.

[38] *The Fársnáma of Ibnu'l-Balkhí*, ed. G. Le Strange and R.A. Nicholson, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, London 1962, p. 97.

[39] *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 135.

[40] Cf. Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, pp. 11–12 n. 38.

Polak[41] rightly observed that Husraw I Anōšurwān (531–579) was put into the Khazar context instead of his famous namesake, Husraw II Parwēz (591–628),[42] who was the king against whom the Türküts (or, "Khazars") fought together with the Byzantines.

3.5 In the mid-sixties of the tenth century, the work of al-Ṭabarī was rendered into New Persian by Muḥammad Balʿamī, which became extremely popular and was later translated into many languages (Turkish, Čağatay,[43] Urdu, and even back to Arabic). The last events appearing in Balʿamī are dated by 842 C.E., and this work contains material unattested in al-Ṭabarī.[44] These authors were contemporary with the heyday of the Khazar Qaganate. The question is, were the Khazars inserted into the Arabic version by the translator(s) of the Sasanian Book of Kings instead of the Turks, whose very early appearance in Persian traditions is well-attested? After all, our authors believed, apparently, with justification, that the Khazar Qaganate was an uninterrupted continuation of the Turkish Qaganate.

3.6 In contrast, the Arabic-writing Persian author Ḥamza b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣfāhānī, who wrote his *History*[45] ca. 961, *i.e.*, also in the time the Khazar Qaganate was still existing, and who had access to original Sasanian historical compositions (in some cases, independent of the Xʷadāy-Nāmag), included in his composition scarce data on the Khazars, and one cannot but suggest that there were very few, if any, references to Khazars in the original Sasanian Book (or books) of Kings.

---

[41] Av.N Polak, *Kāzāriyyā, Tōledōt Mamlakhah Yehūdīt b-Eyrōpā*, Tel-Aviv 1943, pp. 28–9.

[42] Compare § 2.3, in the end.

[43] See some extracts in Mirza A[lexandre] Kazem-Beg, *Derbend-nāmeh, or the history of Derbend: translated from a select Turkish version and published with the text and with notes*, Mémoires des savants étrangers publiés par l'Académie des Sciences, t. VI, St. Petersburg 1851.

[44] *Chronique de Abou-Djafar-Mohammed-ben-Djarir-ben-Yezid Tabari, traduit sur le version persane d'Abou-Ali Mohammed Belami… par M. Hermann Zotenberg*, Paris 1958; the material on the Khazars was printed in B. Dorn, "Nachrichten ueber die Chazaren," *Mémoires de l'Academie Imperiale des Sciences de St. Pétersbourg*, VIe série, t. VI (1844). According to Dunlop (*Jewish Khazars*, p. 58 (Bibliographical Note)), the main source of the additional information not found in the Arabic original of Ṭabarī, was Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī (*Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, ed. M. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Muʿīd-Khān and Maḥāmid ʿAlī al-ʿAbbāsī, Ḥaydarābād 1968–1975). This question needs further examination.

[45] *Taʾrīkh sinī mulūk al-Arḍ wa'l-Anbiyā*, Beirūt 1961.

3.7 In Iranian sources surviving in Arabic, Khazars appear as Byzantine allies in the war against Šāhpūr, clearly a reminiscence of the joint Heraclius / Jibğu attack in the late 20s of the 7th century, probably conflated with some remote memory of the Hunnic participation in Kawād's war against Edessa.[46] Such chronological idiosyncrasy is by no means uncommon in Pahlavi literature,[47] and the reference to the Turks in the *Letter of Tansar* was seen as an anachronism of a similar nature.[48]

My conclusion is that no authentic data about the Khazars in the Sasanian period can be provided by our sources in Arabic.

4.1 To the third group belong texts in the principal Iranian language, New Persian; the first works written in that tongue appeared in the 10th century. The sources in which references to the Khazars are encountered are mostly translations or compilations from Arabic works, some of them lost. Actually, it is evident that the sources belonging to the third group do not form an independent body of traditions and, therefore, should be discussed within the framework of the study of the Arabic sources. It is only their (New) Persian language that distinguishes them from the Arabic sources, and by no means could they represent an independent Iranian tradition going back to the pre-Islamic period. However, they deserve study, and here I would like to make some observations about some tricky problems found in these secondary texts.

4.2 The New Persian compilations, some of them anonymous, whose information, including that on the Khazars, goes back to Arabic sources, are mostly geographies, like *Ḥudūd al-ʿÂlam*,[49] written in 982/3, or

[46] Compare Bo Utas, "The non-religious Books. Pahlavi Literature as a Source to the History of Central Asia," *AAAH* 24 (1976), pp. 115–124.

[47] The Late Sasanian historiography about Anōšurwān's campaigns against the Northern nomads and in Yemen is confused; already the source of Ṯaʿālibī combined wars waged under Anōšurwān against the Khazars and the Abyssinians, making the King of Kings a contemporary with Heraclius, confusing thus two Husraws, I and II (see H. Zotenberg, *Histoire des rois des Perses par Abou Manṣôr ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Moḥammad ibn Ismāʿîl al-Thaʿālibī, texte arabe publié et traduit*, Paris 1900, pp. 614–5). I have dealt with this problem in my "Between Ḥimyar and Māzandarān: Pahlavi Traditions of Husraw Anōšurwān's Wars" (forthcoming).

[48] Cf. M. Boyce, *The Letter of Tansar*, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Serie Orientale Roma sotto la direzione di Giuseppe Tucci Vol. XXXVIII, Roma 1968, p. 19.

[49] *"Xudūd al-ʿĀlam," Rukopis' Tumanskogo*, s vvedeniem i ukazatelem V. Bartol'da, Leningrad 1930; V. Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, Gibb Memorial New Series, XI, London 1937; Persian edition: *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam min al-Mašriq ilā al-Maghrib*, ed. M. Sutūdah, Tehrān 1340/1962.

ʿ*Aǧāʾib al-Makẖlūqāt* by [Pseudo-]Aḥmad Ṭūsī,[50] written in the second half of the 12th century, or *Ǧihān-Nāmah* by Najīb Bakrān, written in the early 13th century,[51] and others, but also some histories: *Zain al-Akẖbār* by Gardīzī,[52] written in the early 11th century, *Fārs-Nāmah* by Ibn al-Balkẖī, *Mudjmal al-Tawārīkẖ* was written in 1126[53] and the work by Ḥamd Allah Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī, *Taʾrīkẖ-i Guzīdah* (completed in 1330).[54] There are only few cases in which some genuine data could be found; otherwise, we are dealing with anachronisms[55] or almost exclusively legendary material: Gardīzī, *e.g.*, tells a legend about the eponymous ancestor of the Qirghizes who killed a Byzantine officer

---

[50] *Gharāʾib al-Mawǧūdāt wa ʿAǧāʾib al-Makẖlūqāt* (ed. M. Sutūdah, Tehrān 1345/196), said to have been penned by Aḥmad Ṭūsī, should be attributed correctly to Najīb Hamadānī, see A.P. Smirnova, *ʿAǧāʾib ad-Dunyā (Čudesa mira)*, kritičeskij tekst, perevod s persidskogo, vvedenie, kommentarij i ukazateli A.P. Smirnovoj, *Pamjatniki pisʾmennosti Vostoka* LXXXIII, Nauka, Moscow 1993, p. 27 ff.

[51] *Muḥammad ibn Naǧīb Bakrān. Ǧahān-Nāma (Kniga o mire), izdanie teksta, vvedenije i ukazateli Ju.E. Borščevskogo*, Pamjatniki Literatury Narodov Vostoka. Teksty. Bolʾšaja Serija X, Izdateľstvo Vostočnoj Literatury, Moscow 1960.

[52] Passages on the Khazars edited in *A magyar honfoglalás kútfői*, ed. Pauler & Szilágyi, Budapest 1900; Gr. Kuun Géza, "Gurdēzī a törökökről," *Keleti Szemle* IV.1–4, Budapest 1903, pp. 17–41, 129–141, 257–287, 131–141; V.V. Bartolʾd [W. Barthold], "Otčjët o pojezdke v Sredn'juju Azıju s naučnoi celʾju v 1893–1894 gg.," *Zapiski Imperatorskoi Akademni Nauk* VIII ser. po ist.-fil. otdel. I, no. 4, St. Peterbourgb 1897 (V.V. Bartolʾd, "<Izvlečenija iz sočinenija Gardizi *Zajn al-axbār*>. Priloženie k "Otčetu o pojezdke v Srednjuju Aziju s naučnoj celʾju 1893–1894 gg.","*Sočinenija. Vol. VIII (Raboty po istočnikovedeniju)*, Izdateľstvo Vostočnoj Literatury "Nauka," Moscow 1973, pp. 23–62; "Gardizi," *idem*., pp. 589–590); Gardīzī, *Zainu'l-Axbār*, ed. ʿAbdo 'l-Ḥeiy Ḥabībī, *Entešārāt-e Bonyād-e Farhang-e Īrān, xxxvii, Manābeʿ-e Tārīkẖ wa Joğrāfiyā-ye Īrān, xii*, Tehrān 1347/1968; A.P. Martinez, "Gardizi's Two Chapters on the Turks," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2 (1982), pp. 109–217.

[53] *Mudjmal al-Tawārikẖ wa-l-Qiṣaṣ, taʾ līf-e sāl-e 520h.*, ed. Malik al-Šuʿrā-e Behār, Tehrān 1318 (1939/40), pp. 95–110.

[54] Ed. E.G. Browne & R.A. Nicholson, Gibb Memorial Series A.R. XIV, vols. I–II, Leiden & London 1910–13.

[55] The information about the "Khazars" found in the *Taʾrīkẖ-i Guzīdah* is illuminating in that it is obvious that the names "Qıbčaq," "Khazar" and "Turks" were used as mutually-changeable synonyms. Cf. the text (vol. I), p. 115, where "Qıbčaq" is mentioned instead of that of "Khazar:" Anūširwān reorganized his army in order to check the malice of the nation of Qıbčaq (*tā šarr-i qawm-i Qıbčaq az mardum-i Īrān dafʿ mīkardand*); the text, p. 120: under Hurmizd, *bādšāh-i dašt-i Kẖazar* invades Īrān together with *qaiṣar-i Rūm*, Arabs and Sāwa-Šāh of Turkestān; ***Dašt-i Kẖazar*** here stands for *Dašt-i Qıbčaq (cf. the text, p. 181: in the days of ʿUmar b. al-Kẖaṭṭāb, ʿAbd al-Raḥman penetrated as far as 200 *farsang*s into *dašt-i Kẖazar* and converted many people to Islam; the text, p. 582: Djingiz Kẖān conquered Tūrān, Kẖaṭa[y], Kẖutan, Čīn u-Māčīn, ***dašt-i Kẖazar***, Saqsīn, Bulghār, Ās, Rūs, Makis, Alān, Qırghīz, Tungut, etc.; cf. a similar list on p. 575, below; Xvārazm and ***Dašt-i Kẖazar*** are given by Djingiz Kẖān to his son Tüši, p. 574; cf. pp. 583, 588).

and fled to the Khazar Qagan; a similar history appears in *Mudjmal al-Tawārīk̲h*;[56] both accounts go to Ibn-Muqaffaʿ and to the pre-Islamic Persian traditions.

4.3 There is also a still unpublished manuscript in Persian from the 12th century by Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Kātib al-Samarqandī,[57] in which an undated legend is told; however, we might deduce from its contents that the legend goes back to the period when the Khazar king was still pagan.[58]

4.4 There is some secondary material to be found in the local Persian chronicles, where it is sometimes interspersed with important information.[59] Written by Ibn Isfandiyār in 1216/17, the *Taʾrīk̲h-i Ṭabarestān* makes mention of the Rusʾ attack on the Caspian Sea in 909;[60] this information was incorporated into *Taʾrīk̲h-i Rūyān* written by Mawlānā Auliyā Allah Âmulī in 1362,[61] but he added an apocrypal legend[62] about the Khazars in the 6th century, putting them in the context of Jāmāsp, Balāš, Qubād (cf. § 3.3) and mentioning Khazar-Ṣaqlāb inroads to Darband, which seems to be taken from Balʿamī. Both sources were used by Marʿašī, the much later compiler of *Taʾrīk̲h-i Ṭabarestān u Rūyān u-Māzandarān*, who wrote in the 15th century.[63] Though the texts are of

---

[56] Cf. Zeki Velidi Togan, *Reisebericht*, pp. 294, 311, 328; Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 8, regarded this account as anachronistic.

[57] *Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Bibl. Acad. Lugduno-Batavae*, III, 14, No. 927; cf. Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, pp. xii, 16 n. 67.

[58] Cf. Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, pp. 16–18.

[59] The complicated problems involved in the *Darband-Nāmah* (composed in Azeri-Turkish from Persian sources on the turn of the 16th to the 17th century; goes up to 456/1064) cannot be treated here. See Mirza A[lexandre] Kazem-Beg, *Derbend-nāmeh, or the history of Derbend: translated from a select Turkish version and published with the text and with notes*, St. Petersburg, Mémoires des savants étrangers publiés par l'Académie des Sciences, t. VI, 1851 (cf. also J. Klaproth, "Extrait du Derbend-nāmeh, ou de l'Histoire de Derbend," *Journal Asiatique* III, mai 1829, pp. 439–467); compare Akademik V.V. Bartolʹd [W. Barthold], "K voprosu o proisxoždenii Derbend-Nāme," *Sočinenija, Vol. VIII (Raboty po istočnikovedeniju)*, Izdatelʹstvo Vostočnoj Literatury "Nauka," Moscow 1973, pp. 469–480. On some of these chronicles, see now Ch. Melville, "The Caspian Provinces: A World Apart. Three local histories of Mazandaran," *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 33.1–2 (Winter/Spring 2000), pp. 45–91.

[60] Ed. ʿA. Iqbāl, Tehrān 1320/1941, I, p. 266.

[61] Ed. M. Sutūdah, Tehrān 1348/1969, p. 105.

[62] Ed. ʿA. K̲halīl, Tehrān 1313/1934, p. 25; ed. M. Sutūdah, Tehrān 1348/1969, pp. 29–30.

[63] *Taʾrīk̲h-i Ṭabarestān u Rūyān u-Māzandarān, Taʾlīf-i Sayyid-i Ṭahīr-ul-Dīn bin*

younger provenance, there is no need to suspect that their data on the Rus' attack is problematic, as it is corroborated by other sources.[64]

4.5 Quite another matter are such late references to "Khazars," who appear always together with Rus' and/or Saqlāb; it seems that there was a lore of traditional ethno-historical information which combined Khazars, Alans, Rus', Saqlāb[65] and other Northern peoples. So, the famous Persian poet Afḍal-ul-Dīn Ibrāhīm Khāqānī (circa 1106–1190), who spent all his life in the Caucasus, mentioned (in his panegyrics dedicated to Akhsatān, a Širwān-Šāh of the 12th century) Rus' and Khazars (*Dīwān*, Tehrān 1937, p. 135), and victories over Rus' and Alans (*Dīwān*, p. 139, 145), Rus' and Sarīr (*Dīwān*, 476; cf. also pp. 36, 406).[66] It was Barthold[67] who suspected that the Ghuzz or Qıpčāq are meant, and

---

Sayyid-i Naṣīr-ul-Dīn-i al-Marʿašī, ed. B. Dorn (*Muhammedanische Quellen zur Geschichte der Südlichen Küstenländer des Kaspischen Meers, I. Theil: Sehir-eddin's Geschichte von Tabarestan, Rujan und Mazandaran, Persischer Text*), SPb 1266/1850 (reprinted with forward by Y. Azhand, Tehrān 1363/1984); cf. Ch.A Storey, *Persian Literature, a Bio-bibliographical Survey*, London 1927, vol. II, pp. 1008–1182; 1073–4, 1072–1073, 1070–1072. On the Rus' attack: Dorn, p. 302; ed. M.Ḥ. Tasbīḥī, Tehrān 1345/1966, p. 144–5. Compared to the work of Âmulī, this text provides some variants; where the first (Sutūdah, pp. 29–30) mentions the Khazar and Rus' only, the second (Dorn, p. 38) speaks of Rus', Khazar, Saqlāb; Khazar and Saqlāb: Dorn, p. 33–34.

[64] Thus, the *History of the Caucasian Albanians* (III, 21) by Movsēs Dasxuranc'i (or Kalankatuac'i, or Kalankaytuac'i) tells us that "in 644, a certain people of strange and foreign appearance called Ṛuzik attacked from the lands of North,… they reached Partaw, the capital of Albania, in no more than three days, and the city, unable to resist them, was put to the sword…" (cf. C.J.F. Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranc'i*, London Oriental Series. Volume 8, London 1961, p. 224 and n. 4), and the Persian Geography (*Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*) of 982 confirms that the Rus' camped at Mubārakī, a large village at the gate of Barda'a (cf. Minorsky, pp. 114, 398–9); another attack is reported by Ibn al-Athīr (*Ibn-el-Athiri Chronicon quod perfectissimum inscribitur, volumen nonum, annos H. 370–450 continens, ad fidem codicum Parisonorum, edidit Carolus Johannes Tornberg*…, Lugduni Batavorum, E.J. Brill 1851–76; *al-Kāmil fī-l-Taʾrīkh*, Beirūt 1966) for 944 C.E.

[65] It is understandable why these two groups became frequently combined together in Muslim (and other) sources beginning from the late 10th century. Alans also were mentioned together with Rus'; indeed, the relations between Alans and Rus' became very close prior to the Mongol invasion.

[66] Cf. V. Minorsky, "Khāqānī and Andronicus Comenus," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London)* 9 (1943–46), pp. 550–578; Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 257; Khanikoff dated ("Lettre de M. Khanykov a M. Dorn, 8/20 May 1857," *Mélanges Asiatique*, II, 120–1) between 1135–1193; cf. also Khanykoff, *Mélanges Asiatique*, III (1853), p. 127 ff.; also N. de Khanikoff, "Mémoire sur Khācāni, poéte persan du XII^{e} siécle. i-ii," *Journal Asiatique*, sixiéme série, tome IV, aoыt-septembre 1864, 137–200; tome V, mars-avril 1865, pp. 295–367.

[67] See W. Barthold, "Derbend," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, X (1911), pp. 940–945, p. 943; "Khazar," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 28 (1924), pp. 943–937, p. 937. Still, Polak (*Kāzāriyyā*, 1943, pp. 217–8) was unconvinced by Barthold.

Minorsky was right, in my opinion, when he suggested that the name of Khazar applies here to the Kumans.[68]

Niẓāmī (circa 1141–1203), the younger contemporary of Khāqānī, made in his epic on Alexander the Great, *Sikandar Nāmah*, the Khazars and the Russians to appear as Alexander's enemies in the North;[69] certainly Niẓāmī had the same events as Khāqānī in mind when he wrote on this "Rus'-Khazar" invasion.

4.6 Some anachronistic information[70] is contained also in the 15th century Persian work by Muḥammad ibn Khāwandšāh Mīrkhōnd, whose *Kitāb-i Taʾrīkh-i Rauḍat al-Ṣafā* (Bombay 1266H = 1849/50)[71] was very popular in the West. There are more anachronisms in our Arab-Persian sources of the later dates, like the reference of Ibn al-Athīr (1160–1234), under 421H = 1030 C.E., to what he calls "the raid of Faḍlūn the Kurd against the Khazars."[72] According to Ibn al-Athīr, after an attack on the "Khazars," Faḍlūn was returning to his own country, when the Khazars fell upon him unexpectedly and killed more than 10,000 of his troops. These "Khazars" recovered the booty which Faḍlūn had taken from them and captured the equipment of the Muslims. Polak[73] notes that this seems to indicate that these Khazars were still non-Muslims; however, Barthold[74] (who identified this "Faḍlūn" as Faḍl ibn Muḥammad of the Šaddādid dynasty, who ruled at Gandjah) argued that here Georgians and/or Abkhazians[75] were probably meant,[76] and this opinion was

[68] Minorsky, "Khāqānī," p. 558.

[69] Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 15 n. 61, p. 256–7: Qanṭāl, chief of the Rus, "from the multitudes of Burtas, Alan and Khazarııan raised up an army like a sea or mountain." Cf. the illuminating note in C. Zuckerman, "On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus' Oleg and Igor," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 53 (1995), pp. 237–270, p. 266.

[70] "The king of the Khazars designated Payğū" <*Jabğū.

[71] Cf. also *Histoire des Sassanides par Mirkhond; (texte persan) a l'usage des Éluves de l'École Royale et Spéciale des Langues Orientales Vivants*, Paris 1843.

[72] *al-Kāmil fi-l-Taʾrīkh,* Beirūt 1966, vol. IX, p. 409; cf. Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 253 n. 97.

[73] "Hitgayyrūt haKūzārīm," *Ṣiyōn* (1941), pp. 177–180, §1; *Kāzāriyyā*, p. 217 ff.

[74] *E.I.*, "Khazar."

[75] In this period, "Abkhazia" meant Western Georgia. Polak, *Kāzāriyyā*, pp. 217–8, still was of opinion that Ibn al-Athīr's information should be regarded as authentic, quoting also (p. 338 n. 27) al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, Ḥaidarābād 1337H, vol. I, p. 194, l. 6–7 [*non vidi*].

[76] *جزر > خزر. Faḍlūn did fight the Georgians and was defeated by them (cf. V. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband in the 10th–11th centuries*, Cambridge 1958, p. 66

upheld by Dunlop,[77] and by Minorsky.[78] I would add that the printed text of Ibn al-Athīr reads (the Beirut edition, IX, p. 409): غزا الخزر, "[to] raid the Khazar;" it is self-evident how easily an error could have been arisen.[79] This is a glaring example of how the Khazars were introduced into a text by later hands, because they, the Khazars, were better known than other Oriental peoples.[80]

5.0 In conclusion: Iranian sources, and sources derived from Iranian traditions, provide us with rich information about the cultural milieu of their authors. Some of these sources are indispensable for reconstruction of some lost literary works, which have nothing to do with the real Khazars. The sources should be scrutinized as representative of their literary tradition, and only then we should dare to use them in reconstruction of remote past, while avoiding far-fetched historical speculation.

---

n. 1; V. F. Minorskij, *Istorija Širvana i Derbenda X–XI vekov*, Moscow 1963, p. 94 n. 20). See also Golden in W. Barthold—P.B. Golden, Khazar, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, Leiden 1978, Vol. IV, pp. 1172–1181, p. 1176b.

[77] *Jewish Khazars*, p. 253.

[78] *History*, p. 35 n. 2; *Istorija*, p. 58 n. 35.

[79] One could suggest to improve to غزا الغز*, "raid the Ghuzz."

[80] Still, Menashe Goldel'man in his article "Xazarija" (*Kratkaja Jevrejskaja Énciklopedija*, IX, Jerusalem 1999, pp. 522–541), p. 537, apparently, following Polak's interpretation of this short and ambiguous piece of information provided by Ibn al-Athīr, found it possible to speak of a "small Jewish princedom with its center at Samandar, which managed to survive until the Mongol-Tatar invasion in 1238–39 and was able to repel the attack of Fadlun, the Kurdish ruler of Ganja, in 1030." This article is full of further badly based and wishful statements. On the problem, see Golden in W. Barthold – P.B. Golden, "Khazar," p. 1176b.

In passing I wish to add that according to the local Muslim chronicles edited and translated by Minorsky (Münedjdjim-bāşı), in 420–1/1029–30 there were invasions southwards carried out by the people of al-Bāb and Rūs; the latter ones, however, entered into the service of Mūsā b. Faḍl, the son of our "Faḍlūn," helping him to fight his brother; two years later, it was the people of Sarīr and the Alāns who raided Širwān. The events of these years are covered pretty well by the local chronists (who certainly possessed much better information that Ibn al-Athīr the Syrian), and they do not mention Khazars as taking part in them. In fact, the actions of the people of Sarīr and the Alāns described under 1030 are almost identical to those described by Ibn al-Athīr. See Minorsky, *A History*, pp. 31–2, 47 (Arabic text: pp. 9, 20–1); Minorskij, *Istorija*, pp. 53–4, 70–1 (Arabic text: pp. 11, 22–3), cf. p. 94 n. 20 and p. 154 and n. 133. For more anachronistic information on the Khazars, cf. also Mirza A[lexandre] Kazem-Beg, *Derbend-nāmeh*, *passim*; see also J. Klaproth, "Extrait du Derbend-nāmeh, ou de l'Histoire de Derbend"); compare V.V. Bartol'd [W. Barthold], "K voprosu o proisxoždenii Derbend-Nāme" (cf. note 59 above).

ARMENIAN AND GEORGIAN SOURCES ON THE KHAZARS: A RE-EVALUATION[1]

Dan D.Y. Shapira

The importance of Armenian and Georgian sources dealing with different aspects of the "Khazar question" is well acknowledged. Łewond, for instance, is an Armenian source indispensable for studying the Arab-Khazar wars.[2] Some aspects of these texts, however, have not yet received due attention, and it is my main purpose here to demonstrate the complicated interaction between these texts.

Neither Jews nor Khazars were strangers to the Caucasus. It is sufficient to recall that the famous Schechter (or "Cambridge") Document,[3] which records the semi-legendary version of the Jewish migration into Khazaria, begins with the word "Armīnīya." Unfortunately, we do not know for certain what appeared before that word in the now lost sections,[4]

---

[1] The system of transliteration adopted here for Georgian is that used, for example, in G. Hewitt, *A Learner's Grammar*, Rutledge, London 1996; for Armenian the most commonly used system, e.g. that of the *Revue des études arméniennes*, was adopted.

[2] *Patmut'iwn Łewondeay meci vardapeti Hayoc'*, ed. I. Ezeanc', St. Peterburg 1897. Translations: *Istorija xalifov Vardapeta Gevonda, pisatelja VIII v.*, per. K. Patkanov, St. Peterburg 1862; *Ghévond, Histoire des guerres et des conquêtes des Arabes en Arménie*, trans. V. Chahnazarian, Paris, 1858; Z. Arzoumanian, *The History of Lewond*, Philadelphia 1982. Cf. also A.N. Ter-Gevondjan, *Armeinija i arabskij xalifat*, Erevan 1977; J. Laurent, *L'Armenie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886*, nouvelle édition revue et mise a jour par M. Canard, Armenian Library of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbonne 1980. The Arab-Khazar wars are, however, beyond the scope of the present paper.

[3] Lately re-edited in N. Golb & O. Pritsak, *Khazaran Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century*, Ithaca, New York 1982, p. 106 ff.

[4] D.M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton University Press 1954, pp. 166–7, made a plausible suggestion that Ibn Šaprūṭ's Letter retells the contents of the Schechter Document to the Khazar King Joseph, "with the intention of finding out whether the Khazar king knows anything about them" (i.e., the traditions current in Spain about the Khazars). Ibn Šaprūṭ mentions "an army of Chaldaeans" rising against the Khazar Jews. It seems that these "Chaldaeans" persecuting Jews (who later came to Khazaria *via* "Armīnīya") were referred to in the lost part of the Cambridge Document. See further. I use this opportunity to refer, without further elaboration, to a parallel tradition found in Armenian historical writings, according to which the ancestors of the Armenian people born in Babylonia migrated to the *Northern* countries of Ararat, see for exapmle [Pseudo-]Sebēos, Part I (Sebēos: *Patmut'iwn Sebēosi Episkoposi i Herakln*,

but it would seem from the context that it concerned some migration through (or from) "Armīnīya" (which included, for the author of the text, much of Transcaucasia), or of some persecution of Jews[5] which resulted in their exodus from "Armīnīya."

Georgia and Armenia (and Caucasian Albania, so tightly connected to both) were for decades, if not centuries, battlegrounds for the Khazars, who repeatedly invaded these countries in order to pillage, or to confront their Arab enemies.[6] Armenian and Georgian authors have preserved for us valuable information about Alans, Maskuts, Bulghars, Basils, Savirs, Khazirs / Khazars, Huns and other Northern peoples. However, much of this information, especially that found in the Georgian sources (which are of later dates as compared to the Armenian ones), is legendary in character, and therefore must be treated with caution. Both the Armenian and Georgian historical traditions suggest a very early date for a Jewish presence in their respective countries, but there is a difference between the historical fates of these two Jewries: while Armenian Jews vanished, most of them probably through assimilation, as the Armenian

---

ed. T. Mihrdatian, Constantinopole 1851; ed. E. Patkanov, St. Peterburg 1879; *Non vidi*: Sebēos, *Patmout'iwn*, ed. G. Abgaryan, Erevan 1979; translations: K. Patkanjan, *Istorija imperatora Irakla. Sočinenije jepiskopa Sebeosa pisatelja VII vēka*, St. Peterburg 1862; F. Macler, *Histoire d'Héraclius*, Paris 1904).

[5] We do know that after the Byzantines defeated the Persians in the late twenties of the seventh century, there was within the Empire, which included, in these years, also much of Transcaucasia, a forced conversion to Christianity, the first known so far. As to 'Armenia', it is worth noting in passing that such an important, albeit legendary, source as the Ethiopian *Kebrā Negāst*, h. 117, made reference to a *simultaneous* Jewish uprising in both *Armenia* and Arabia (I. Shahid, "The *Kebra Nagast* in the Light of Recent Research," *Le Muséon* 89 (1976), pp. 133–178, see p. 135); the Jewish revolt in Arabia refers to the Jewish state of Dhu Nuwās in the twenties of the 6th century; the *Kebra Negast* is a source well aware of things Armenian—it is enough to point out that all the prophecies in this work are put in the mouth of none other than the Armenian St. Gregory the Illuminator, cf. I. Shahid, "The *Kebra Nagast* in the Light of Recent Research," pp. 136, 173–4. It appears, however, that the reference to a Jewish revolt in Armenia in the 12th century Ethiopian work is only a literary parallelism void of any historical implications; see D.D.Y. Shapira, "Stray Notes on Aksum and Ḥimyar" *Scrinium* 2 (2006), pp. 416–427, esp. 421–422. On St. Gregory see further.

[6] The Khazar invasion into the Northern Caucasus accured *circa* 660, after the Turkic Qaganate collapsed in 657–9, with Berzilia on the Volga being one of the first Khazar conquests; as C. Zuckerman has demonstrated (see K. Cukerman, "Xazary i Vizantija: pervyje kontakty," *Materialy po Arxeologii, Istorii i Étnografii Tavrii*, VIII (Simferopol' 2001), pp. 312–333, and in this volume), the Arabs preceded the Khazars in Transcaucasia and not *vice versa*, and it was the Arabs who became a stumbling block for the Khazars there, and not the other way round.

sources themselves suggest (or else, they left Armenia),[7] Georgian Jewry continues to survive—and to flourish—even today (albeit the question whether the Georgian Jewry of the Miidle Ages and later can be traced to the first Christian centuries remains open). We should stress already at this stage that there is no implicit reference in our Armenian and Georgian sources to Khazar Judaism. This silence is remarkable, especially when compared with Old Russian, Byzantine (*Vita of Cyril* extant in Slavonic),[8] Arabic, Persian (including Zoroastrian Persian),[9] and Hebrew sources. The impression one gets would seem to imply that everyone knew there were some Jewish Khazars, except their closest, and, one might add, oldest, neighbors. In the following article, I mainly intend to treat the Armenian and Georgian sources dealing with the Khazars, but I will also touch on some of the references to the Jews proper, hoping to demonstrate that both *sujets* are connected. As it is methodologically unsound to try to separate Armenian and Georgian sources, I shall treat them as a *corpus*.

I

Armenia was a Christian nation, torn since 387 C.E. between Byzantium and Sasanian Iran. Armenian Christianity was originally Syriac,[10]

---

[7] L.M. Melikset-Bek, *Armeno-Hebraica*, Tbilisi 1945 [reprint: "Aticot" Antiquarian Booksellers, Tel-Aviv 1970; no pagination], p. 31, draws attention to the fact that Armenian sources stopped mentioning Jews in Armenia from the 7th–8th centuries, and suggested that some of them may have emigrated to Khazaria. On linguistic aspects of the supposed early Jewish-Armenian and Jewish-Georgian interaction, cf. D. Shapira, "Aramaeo-Judaeo-Armeniaca," *Xristianskij Vostok* IV (X) (St. Petersbourg & Moscow), pp. 330–336.

[8] There is no mention of Khazar Judaism in Greek Byzantine sources, however (see O. Pritsak, "The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism," *Harvard Ukranian Studies* 2.3 (1978), pp. 261–281, p. 267).

[9] Cf. D. Shapira, "Iranian Sources…" (in this volume).

[10] The best study on the dependence of Armenian Christianity on Syriac Christianity is still E. Ter-Minassiantz, *Die Armenische Kirche in ihrer Beziehungen zu den syrischen Kirchen*, Leipzig 1904. On Christianity in Sasanian Iran, cf., *i.a.*, J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse sous le dynastie Sassanide*, Paris 1904; M.-L. Chaumont, "Les sassanides et la christinisation de l'empire iranien au 3^{e} siècle," *RHR* 165 (1964), pp. 165–202; J.P. Asmussen, "Christians in Iran," *The Cambridge History of Iran* 3.2, ed. E.Yarshater, Cambridge 1983, pp. 924–948; J.R. Russell, "Christianity. i.," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* V (1992), pp. 523–8.

and was marked by certain Judaizing tendences, but later it was exposed to various Byzantine influences, and finally Armenia accepted Monophysism.[11] Culturally, Armenians continue both Byzantine and Sasanian traditions, amalgamated in a unique blend.[12] According to the traditional date, Armenia was christianized in 314 by St. Gregory the Illuminator (*Lousaworič'*) the Parthian,[13] and Eastern Georgia, or Kartli, in 335–7, by St. Nino,[14] whose activities were associated by the traditions, in rather different ways, to those of St. Gregory.[15] The Eastern part of Armenia, so-called Persarmenia, was turned into a Sasanian *marzbān*ate[16] in 428 C.E., and about the same time the breach of communion with Caesarea of Cappadicia was confirmed; it was at about that time that St. Mesrop Maštoc invented the Armenian (and later, also the Georgian and the Albanian) alphabet(s),[17] and impressive literary activity began. The Armenian language was used for religious and literary purposes not only by Armenians, but also by other Caucasian peoples,

---

[11] On the genesis of Armenian Christianity, see now N. Garsoïan, *L'église arménienne et le grand schism d'Orient*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 574, Subsidia, Tomus 100, Lovanii 1999.

[12] On this aspect of Armenian civilization, see, *e.g.*, the studies assembled and reprinted in N.G. Garsoïan, *Armenia Between Byzantium and the Sasanians*, Variorum Reprints, London 1985; J.R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series Volume Five, Cambridge 1987; compare also J.R. Russell, "Armeno-Iranica," *Acta Iranica* 25 (*Barg-e Sabz, Festschrift Asmussen*), Liege-Téhéran 1985, pp. 447–458; "The Name of Zoroaster in Armenian," *Journal of Society for Armenian Studies* 2 (1985–6), pp. 3–10; "Bad Day at Burzēn Mihr: Notes on an Armenian Legend of St. Bartholomew," *Bazmavep* CXLIV 1–4, Venice 1986, pp. 255–267; "Aša in Armenia," *Handes Amsorya* 1987, pp. 655–662; "The Etymology of Armenian *vardavar*," *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* 13 (1992), pp. 63–69.

[13] That is to say, just about the same time as the Edict of Milan was issued. There are many problems surrounding this date, but they cannot be dealt with here.

[14] Western Georgia, Lazica, was Christianized by King Tsate and the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527–565) only in 523, although at least one city, Pytyus (Pityonte, Georgian Bičvinta, Russian Picunda) had a bishop as early as in 325.

[15] The literature on the subject is extensive, cf., *e.g.*, P. Peeters, "Les débuts du Christianisme en Géorgie d'après les sources hagiographiques," *Analecta Bollandiana* L (1932), pp. 5–58.

[16] On this institution, see A.I. Kolesnikov "O termine 'marzban' v Sasanidskom Irane," *Palestinskij Sbornik*, 27/90 (1981), pp. 49–56; Ph. Gignoux, "L'organisation administrative sasanide: le cas du *marzbān*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, Vol. 4 [*From Jāhiliyya to Islam, Colloquium, Jerusalem, June 1980*] (1985), pp. 1–29.

[17] The literature on this subject is so vast that even an attempt to refer to it here would be unwise.

first of all, by Georgians[18] and Albanians.[19] We shall return to this point later.

II

1.1 For Armenians, the most important Armenian historian, their "father of history" (*patmahayr*) is Movsēs Xorenac'i.[20] He was believed to be one of the pupils of the inventor of the Armenian script, Mesrop Maštoc (died 440) and of the patriarch Sahak (died 439), of St. Gregory's line. However, the date of Xorenac'i is still one of the most debated problems in Armenian historiography,[21] for he is dated by various authors

[18] With only traces of Armenian *Vorlagen* to be found now in the most ancient Georgian texts. The most ancient evidence of the Georgian script, interestingly enough, is a Georgian inscription from Jerusalem dated 430, less than a decade after the Georgian alphabet was—allegedly—invented by St. Mesrop. In the 5th–6th centuries, the Land of Israel became the most important center of Georgian monasticism after the oldest Georgian monasteries, Palavra and Mar-Saba, were founded there (483). The 85 oldest Georgian MSs come from Mt. Sinai's St. Catherine monastery, among them *mravaltavi* (polukefalion), a lectionary dated 864.

[19] In fact, all extant Christian literature from Caucasian Albania is in Armenian. There are remnants of the Albanian alphabet and some inscriptions in it, see I. V. Abuladze [Abulaje], "K otkrytiju alfavita kavkazskix albancev," *Izvestija Instituta Jazyka, Istorii i Material'noj Kul'tury Gruzinskogo Filiala AN SSSR* IV 4 (Tbilisi 1938), pp. 69–71; A.G. Šanidze [Šanije], "Novootkrytyj alfavit kavkazskix albancev i jego značenie dlja nauki," *Izvestija Instituta Jazyka, Istorii i Materialnoj Kul'tury im. N.Ja. Marra Gruzinskogo Filiala AN SSSR* IV.1, Tbilisi 1938; H. Kurdian, "The Newly Discovered Alphabet of the Caucasian Albanians," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1956, pp. 81–83; A.G. Šanidze [Šanije], "Jazyk i pis'mo kavkazskix albancev," *Sakartvelos SSR Mecnierebata Ak'ademiis Sazogadoebriv Mecnierebata Ganq'opilebis Moambe* I, Tbilisi 1960; R.H. Hewsen, "On the Alphabet of the Caucasian Albanians," *Revue des études arméniennes* NS, Vol. I (1964), pp. 427–32; this latter article was published also in Russian, with a "Commentary" by G.A. Klimov, in *Tajny drevnix pis'mën. Problemy dešifrovki*, "Progress," Moscow 1976, pp. 444–452; two new Albanian palimpsest MSs were found during the last decade among the Georgian MSs in the Mt. Sinai's St Catherine monastery library, dated to the 10th century, see Z. Aleksidzé [Aleksije] & J.P. Mahé, "Decouverte d'une texte albanien: une langue ancienne du Caucase retrouvée," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettre* (1997), pp. 517–532; Z. Aleksidze [Aleksije], "Novyje pamjatniki pis'mennosti Kavkazskoj Albanii," *Xristianskij Vostok* NS 1 (7), St. Peterburg—Moscow 1999, pp. 3–13, and a short note in the same volume by S.A. Starostin, "Fonetičeskij kommentarij k stat'je Z.N. Aleksidze," pp. 13–14.

[20] Translation: R.W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i: History of the Armenians*, *Harvard University Armenian Texts and Studies, 4*, Cambridge, Mass. 1978. See also J.P. & A. Mahé, *Moïse de Khorène. Histoire de l'Arménie*, Paris 1993.

[21] On the late date, see as early as A. von Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig 1889), iii, pp. 282–331 ("Über die Glaubwürdigkeit der arm. Geschichte des Moses v. Khoren") and iii, pp. 332–338 ("Moses von Chorene"). For the importance of the data about the

as belonging to the period from the 7th–9th century. In any case, it seems to be proven that the text of his "History" remained unattested by other Armenian authors until the 10th century. His information about the Khazars is unreliable and anachronistic not only for a 5th century author, but even for one living in the 7th or 9th centuries; his accounts of the invasions of the Alans and the Basils (II 50, 85) are modeled upon Josephus' description of the Alan invasion of Armenia (Wars VII 7.4); it is not certain whether Movsēs only knew Josephus second-hand,[22] or whether he had an Armenian version to work from,[23] but, as Thomson has shown, many of the traditions preserved in Xorenacʻi dealing with ancient Jewish colonies in Armenia, are in fact "idiosyncratic elaborations" of Josephus, reshaped to fit the Armenian setting, as the aim of Movsēs' "Jewish traditions" was to establish an honorable Israelite genealogy for his Bagratuni patrons.

1.2 Let us examine the traditions in Movsēs Xorenacʻi about Jews and Khazars:

II 6: King Vałaršak[24] summoned a foreign barbarian nation from the northern Caucasus to settle in the upper course of the Araxes, west of Mt Arargats, where Kars is located; the place was later called Vanand, because Vłendur[25] Bulgar Vund dwelt there.

It is clear that some Bulgar or Khazar colony is cast here into the remote past.

II 9: In the days of Aršak son of Vałaršak, there was much tumult in the regions of the Greater Caucasus, in the Land of Bulgars, and many of them came to Armenia, to the county of Koł.

Khazars as evidence for the late date of Xorenacʻi, cf. L.M. Melikset-Bek, "Xazary po drevnearmjanskim istočnikam v svjazi s problemoj Moiseja Xorenskogo," *Issledovanija po Istorii Kulʼtury Narodov Vostoka. Sbornik v česť akademika I.A. Orbeli*, Moscow-Leningrad 1960, pp. 112–118.

[22] So Thomson, *Moses Khorenatsʻi*, pp. 25–27.

[23] See, now, R.W. Thomson, "The Armenian Version of the Georgian Chronicles," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 5 (1990–1991), pp. 81–90 (pp. 82–3), where the author states that the old Armenian version of Josephus' *History of the Jewish Wars* was lost and the extant Armenian translation of the *Wars* by Stephen of Lvov (Armenian: Ilov) was revised from a Latin rendering.

[24] We are dealing with the first centuries of the current era, but Xorenacʻi's chronology is confused.

[25] Compare *Ašxarhacʻoycʻ Movsēsi Xorenacʻwoy: Géographie du Moïse de Corène*, ed. trans. A. Soukry, Venice 1881, p. 101; cf. further.

This tradition affirms the former, calling Bulgars by their name; Koł is identical with Vanand mentioned in the preceding passage.

II 58: Contains a genealogy of the Ałavelian family; they are said to be relatives of the Alan princess, Satanik (Satana of the North-Caucasian Nart epic), who became Artašes' wife. In the days of Xosrov the father of Trdat, the members of the family allied themselves by marriage with a certain mighty man of the Basil people.

Again, we have *Northmen*, in this case Alans and Basils, who go south and become prominent in Armenia. Why our author feels the need to stress the foreign ancestry of certain Armenian clans and regions is a separate question which we shall not deal with here.

II 65: Under Vałarš son of Trdat, at the end of the second century, Nor K'ałak' (Kainēpolis, "the New City," which is the same as Vałaršapat, mentioned in the Talmud)[26] was built south of Mt Aragac; here Vałarš settled a Jewish colony[27] and the place became a commercial center. Under the same king, the Khazars and Basils united, passing through the Čoł Gate under the leadership of their king, a certain Vnasēp Surhap (this is clearly an Iranian name, probably *Wīnāsp Suxrāb, or *Wšnāsp / *Gušnāsp Suxrāb);[28] they crossed over to this (southern) side of the River Kura, but Vałarš defeated them twice, although he himself died at the hands of their archers.

This is the first time Movsēs mentions the Khazars, in the third century; by all opinions, it is too early.[29]

II 86: It contains an Armenicized version of the *bios kai politeia* of St.[30] Nino / Nunē, who (sent by St. Gregory the Illuminator of the Armenian

[26] Ju.A. Soloduxo, "K voprosu ob armjano-irakskix torgovyx svjazax v IV v.," *Issledovanija po istorii kul'tury narodov Vostoka. Sbornik v čest' akademika I.A. Orbeli*, Moscow-Leningrad 1960, pp. 128–132; cf. also J. Neusner, *Soviet Views of Talmudic Judaism. Five Papers by Yu. A. Solodukho in English Translation*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity from the First to the Seventh Cenury. Vol. II, Soviet Views of Talmudic Judaism, Leiden 1973.

[27] In passing, it should be noted that J. Neusner, "The Jews in Pagan Armenia," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 1964, pp. 230–40, was to a great extent based on Xorenac'i's data and is therefore of limited value.

[28] See J. Marquart, *Die Chronologie der alttürkischen Inschriften*, Leipzig 1898, p. 92 and n. 2 there.

[29] Cf. J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge*, Lepzig 1903, p. 489; C. Toumannoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Georgetown 1963, p. 331; Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, p. 211 n. 11.

[30] Called *ēraneli* [=*makaria*], cf. B. Martin-Hisard, "Jalons pour une histoire du culte

nation) is said to belong to the circle of the virgin martyr, St. Hṛipʻsimē.[31] The Armenian version of the conversion of the Georgian King Mirian / *Mihrān[32] contains details taken from the Armenian stories about the conversion of the Armenian King Tṛdat, the torturer of St. St. Hṛipʻsimē. But it is to be observed that in the Armenian version of the St. Nino's account there is no reference to any Jewish milieu, which is so prominent in the Georgian version (especially, in the version of *Mokcevai Kartlisai*, or *The Conversion of Kartli*, on which see further). Nevertheless, the Armenian version adds an interesting detail: St. Nino also preaches in the Land of *Maskʻutʻkʻ* (*i.e.*, Masagets) in Southern Daghestan, which was later closely associated with the Khazars. As his authority for this information, Movsēs cites Agatʻangełos.[33]

1.4 To conclude, what we can see of Movsēs' references to Northern peoples, including the Khazars, is purely legendary and / or anachronistic in character, but there are hints of some kind of connection felt to exist between the Northern peoples and the Jews, and this precisely in descriptions of the period of the Christianization of Armenia and Georgia; the same tendency exists also in other Armenian and Georgian texts, as will be demonstrated later.

What we find in Movsēs about Jews is too little for a fifth century author, and yet too much about Khazars, Bulgars and Basils. Movsēs,

---

de Sainte Nino (fin IVe–XIIIe s.)," *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. J.-P. Mahé & R.W. Thomson, Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA 1997, pp. 53–78, pp. 66.

[31] The oldest account on St. Nino is found in Rufinus, see F. Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens au IVe siècle. L'apport de l'Histoire Ecclésiastique de Rufin d'Aquilée*, Paris 1981, pp. 85–122 (cf. also B. Martin-Hisard, "Jalons pour une histoire du culte de Sainte Nino (fin IVe–XIIIe s.)," *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. J.-P. Mahé & R.W. Thomson, Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA 1997, pp. 53–78, pp. 62–64); cf. *La Narratio De Rebus Armeniae*, Edition critique et commèntaire par G. Garitte, *CSLO 132*, Subsidia 4, Louvain 1952); cmp. M. Tarchnišvili, "Sources arméno-géorgiennes de l'histoire ancienne de l'Église de Géorgie," *Le Muséon*, 60 (1947), pp. 29–50. Cf. also D.D.Y. Shapira, "'Tabernacle of Vine'. Some (Judaizing?) Features in the Old Georgian *Vita* of St. Nino," *Memorial R.P. Michél van Esbroeck, S.J.: Scrinium* 2 (2006), pp. 273–306.

[32] Mirian III, or St. Mirian, the first Christian king of Iberia, the founder of the so-called "Chosroid" dynasty. See n. 31 above.

[33] See Thomson, *Moses Khorenatsʻi*, p. 41 ff.; cf. also R.W. Thomson, *Agathangelos: History of the Armenians*, Albany NY 1976; text: *Agatʻangełos, Patmoutʻiwn Hayocʻ*, ed. G. Tēr-Mkrtčʻean & S. Kanayeancʻ, Tiflis 1909 (reprint: Delmar NY 1980).

clearly, knew something about Khazar, Bulgar and Basil colonization in Transcaucasia in later times, but this information is found in other sources as well, so we are compelled to reject Movsēs as a source of importance for Khazar studies.

III

2.1 There is another work previously attributed to Movsēs Xorenacʻi, the so-called "Armenian Geography" (or *Ašxarhatsʻuytsʻ*) of "Pseudo-Movsēs Xorenacʻi,"[34] which contains authentic and valuable material on Khazars and other North-Caucasian peoples. In fact, it is there that the first authentic notice of the Khazars in Armenian sources was made.[35] The *Ašxarhatsʻuytsʻ* exists in two recensions, the older and longer one (written between the mid-sixth century, when Justinian established the form of administrative division of the eastern Byzantine provinces reflected in the work), and the younger and shorter one (dated prior to the second half of the seventh century, before the Arab onslaught). This work contains information originating in the works of Ptolemy, Marine of Tyre, and lost Middle Persian geographical works,[36] and it was among the sources used by the author of the "History" of [Pseudo-]Xorenacʻi.

---

[34] The author is now believed to be Anania Širakacʻi, the most important Armenian polymath of his age. For translation and commentary, see R.H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak (Ašxarhacʻoycʻ). The Long and the Short Recensions. Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften) Nr. 77, Wiesbaden 1992. This translation was made from still unpublished MSs. For the printed text, we still have only the obsolete edition of *Ašxarhacʻoycʻ Movsēsi Xorenacʻwoy: Géographie du Moïse de Corène*, by Soukry, Venise 1881. As to the question of authorship, it is worth noting that Xorenacʻi's autobiography is a patchwork of quotations taken, *i.a.*, from the autobiography of Anania Širakacʻi, see Thomson, *Moses Khorenatsʻi* , p. 2.

[35] See Thomson, *Moses Khorenatsʻi* , p. 52.

[36] The Iranian material was studied in J. Marquart, *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenacʻi. Mit historisch-kritischem Kommentar und historischen und topographischen Excursen* (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Geselschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Ph-hist. Klasse, Neue Folge. Bd.III aus den Jahren 1899–1901), Berlin 1901; reviewed by de Goeje in *WZKM* 16 (1902), pp. 189–97. On some problems of the Sasanian geography, see D. Shapira, "Was There Geographical Science in Sasanian Iran?," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientorum Hungaricae*, Vol. 54 (2–3), Budapest 2001, pp. 319–338; cf. also D. Shapira, "Pahlavi References to Armenia," *Iran & Caucasus III–IV, Research Papers from the Caucasian Centre for Iranian Studies*, Yerevan, edited by Garnik Asatrian, Teheran 1999–2000, pp. 143–146.

One of the examples of borrowing by the author of the "History" from the "Geography" is the mention of Khazars in II 65.[37]

2.2 Some interesting data is added by the Armenian redactor of *Ašxarhats'uyts'* to his sources. He mentions[38] Turks and Bulgars, whose tribes were named after the rivers: Kup'i-Bulgars,[39] Duč'i-Bulgars, Ołxontor-Bulgars,[40] Č'dar-Bulgars;[41] he also mentions the son of Kubrat who fled to the Hippic mountains.[42]

2.3 Another passage from the same compilation belongs to a later date, as it mentions *Asparhrouk* (Asparfrouk'), the son of *Xoubraat'a*,[43] fugitive of *Xazrac'* (*Chasuari*),[44] from the Mountain of Bulgars, as already living on the Danube (since, this interpolation should originate *circa* 660 C.E.).

2.4 He also knew the river called At'l (*Atil) in Turkic, in the middle of which there is an island called "Black Island" (*Sev Kłzi*), in which the *Baslk'*, or *Barsilk'* in the short redaction, take refuge for the fear of

---

[37] Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i* , p. 52.

[38] V.18, see Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak*, p. 55.

[39] Compare Knuphis or Couphen in Byzantine sources, and Qwpyn in the Hebrew "Kiev Document," for which see N. Golb & O. Pritsak, *Khazaran Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century*, Ithaca, New York 1982, p. 10 ff.

[40] Onoghoundours.

[41] Citar, Cotrogurs.

[42] Previously identified with the Kuma / Quma hills; for a new identification, with the Divnogorje Hights near Voronež, cf. C. Zuckerman (K. Cukerman, "Xazary i Vizantija: pervyje kontakty," *Materialy po Arxeologii, Istorii i Étnografii Tavrii*, VIII (Simferopol' 2001), pp. 312–333 (p. 330), and in this volume.

[43] This is evidently the Armenian form of the name of the 7th cnt. (645–701) Bulgar Khan Asparouk, Slavonic Isperixŭ, whose name was compared by Németh (J. Németh, "Die Herkunft der Namen Kobrat und Esperüch," *KCsA* 2 (1932), pp. 440–447, cf. also J. Benzing, "Das Hunische, Donaubolgarische und Wolgabolgarische," *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamentae, ediderunt Jean Deny et al.*, I, Aquis Mattiacis apud Francisum Steiner (Wuesbaden 1959), pp. 684–695, p. 688) to the Osmanlı *esperi*, 'wilder Falke, der schwer zu dressieren ist'; according to Bailey (H.W. Bailey, "North Iranian Medley," *BSOAS* (1979), pp. 207–210, p. 208), the Armenian, Greek and Slavonic forms go back to Iranian *isperuxŭ*, *isporŭ*, 'controller of horses, knight'. Other Iranian etymologies in P.B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 1992, p. 246 n. 76.

[44] The defective forms in the notes to this paragraph are taken from Soukry, as a critical edition is still lacking.

Khazars and Bušxs,[45] who regularly make razziahs against them from east and west.

When the older version was composed, Daghestan (near Msndr̥, identified by many scholars with Samandar) was still inhabited by Western Turks (*Türküts),[46] and not by Khazars.[47] Our author calls them *Apaxtʿark*ʿ, *i.e.*, *Northmen*, who, he adds, are *Tʿourkʿanstank*ʿ, the *Turkestānis*; the redactor of the later version, made after 660,[48] already calls the king of the North "*xakʿan*, who is the lord of the Khazars," adding that "the queen, or *xatun*, the wife of the *xakʿan*, is of the Barsilkʿ nation."[49]

Their appellation as Turkestānis, not just Turks,[50] alludes to their origins from Inner Asia, and one would guess, they are the members of the royal tribe of the Ašina clan (the author mentions that the *xakʿan* and

[45] Identified in M.I. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, Leningrad 1962, pp. 234–5, as Bašqurts. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak*, pp. 114–5 (n. 49) and p. 236, identified them as the Volga Bulghars. Dimitrov in his book (D. Dimitrov, *Prabŭlgarite po severnoto i zapadnoto Černomorie: kŭm vŭprosa za tiaxnoto prisustvie i istorija v dnešnite ruski zemi i roljata im pri obrazuvaneto na bŭlgarskata dŭržava*, Varna 1987) suggests that *Bušxs* should be *Bığ[ar]s, adding: "the 'island' in question, which 'is called Black because of many Basils living there together with their numerous livestock,' is probably the land between the Eastern Manuč river and the present estuary of the Volga. The region has been called "Black lands" for a long time and it is even today an excellent winter grazing ground for the population of the Northern Caucasus." Cf. also S.A. Romašov, "Bolgarskije plemena Severnogo Pričernomor'ja v V–VII vv.," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, Vol. VII 1992–94 (1994), pp. 207–252. On the other hand, it was suggested that the island in question is the same, located in the estuary of the Volga, where later the palace of the Khazar Qağan stood, see J. Marquart, *Die Chronologie der alttürkischen Inschriften*, Leipzig 1898, p. 90. On the tribal name *Bušx*, cf. P.B. Golden, *Khazar Studies. An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars*, Vol. I, Budapest 1980, p. 253 ff. Compare now C. Zuckerman (K. Cukerman, "Xazary i Vizantija: pervyje kontakty," *Materialy po Arxeologii, Istorii i Étnografii Tavrii*, VIII (Simferopol' 2001), pp. 312–333 (p. 327), and in this volume).

[46] Cf. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, pp. 142–156; cmp. Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, p. 52.

[47] V.18, Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak*, p. 57.

[48] See C. Zuckerman (K. Cukerman, "Xazary i Vizantija: pervyje kontakty," *Materialy po Arxeologii, Istorii i Étnografii Tavrii*, VIII (Simferopol' 2001), pp. 312–333 (p. 330), and in this volume).

[49] V.18, Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak*, p. 57A. Writing around the same date, Sebēos called this ruler "*xakʿan*, king of the Northern lands."

[50] The term *Tourkestani* is, however, also found in Sebēos, who had been writing a short time before. The Western Turkic Qağanate, one should remember, was destroyed by the Chinese in 659. On the Armenian passage and its implications, cf. C. Zuckerman, "Jerusalem as the Center of the Earth in Anania Širakacʿi's *Ašxarhacʿoyc*ʿ," *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land*, ed. M.E. Stone, R.R. Ervine, N. Stone, Hebrew University Armenian Studies 4 (Leuven—Paris—Sterling, Virginia 2002), pp. 255–274.

xatun, his wife, live there), while their designation as "*Northmen*" has its precise parallels in all other Armenian and Georgian sources, enabling us to identify "*Northmen*" in these sources as Khazars proper.

He also mentions the city of the Huns called Varačʿan (*Varačʿan kʿałakʿ nocin Honacʿ*); to the west lived Savirs on the River Tʿald.[51] To the north, near Darband which he equated with Čor, he mentions a tower in the sea. Eastwards, there was a long wall called *Azountkawat*, that is, attributed to Kawād. Unlike that of Xorenacʿi, this information is authentic.

IV

3.1 We shall now turn to Georgian sources, returning to the sources in Armenian later. The most ancient dated Georgian text, with the exception of the inscriptions, is the *Vita* of St. Šušanik.[52] Šušanik, the daughter of the famous Armenian hero Vardan Mamikonean,[53] was married to Varsken, or Vazgēn, the son of Aršuša, the Sasanian *pitiaxš* (or *bdeašx*)[54]

---

[51] Pseudo-Movsēs Xorenacʿi, ed. Soukry, 27/37: "North of Darband is the kingdom of the Huns, near the sea. In its western (part) is Varačʿan, the city of the Huns, and Čʿungars and *Smēndṛ [**Msndṛ*, see Marquart, *Streifzüge*, pp. 58, 492]. Toward the East live the Savirkʿ up to the river Tʿald." This Tʿald was said (so Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, p. 107, from where the translation is taken) to be Atil, but the "Geography" knew Atil under its own name, where Basils, not Savirs, were living, and it was plundered, much northwards, by Khazars and Bušxs, not by Savirs. In my opinion, *Tʿald* can be compared to the mysterious *Tyzwl* of the Letter of Joseph the Khazar king.

[52] Martyrdom of Šušanik, *Martʾwilobaj Šušanikisi* (the title in Georgian, Armenian, Russian: *Jakov Curtaveli, "Mučeničestvo Šušanik. Gruzinskij i armjanskij teksty izdal i issledovanijem, variantami, slovarem i ukazatelem snabdil Ilja Abuladze*), ed. I. Abuladze (Abulaje), Tbilisi 1938; Translations: D.M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*, London 1956, pp. 44–56; Jakov Curtaveli, "Mučeničestvo Šušanik," *Drevnegruzinskaja literatura (V–XVIII vv.)*, Tbilisi 1982, pp. 25–41. Cf. also P. Peeters, "Sainte Šoušanik, martyre en Arméno-Géorgie," *Analecta Bollandiana* 53 (1935), pp. 5–48; M. Bíró, "Georgian Sources on the Caucasian Campaign of Heracleios," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae*, XXXV (1) 1981, pp. 121–132.

[53] The *sparapet* of Persarmenia (since 432), the grandson of the afore-mentioned Catholicos Sahak, who fell at the battle of Arvarair on 2 June 541 while defending Christianity against the attempts of Yazdigird II to impose Zoroastrianism. See on this war: *Ełišēi vasn Vardanay ew Hayocʿ Paterazmin*, ed. E. Tēr-Minasjan, Erevan 1957, pp. 197–8; translation: R.W. Thomson, *Elishe: History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, Harvard Armenian texts and Studies 5, Cambridge Mass. 1982; Russian translation and study [to be translated into English by Prof. J.R. Russell]: K.N.Juzbašjan [Yuzbašian], *Jelišė. Slovo o vojne armjasnkoj*, perevod s drevnearmjanskogo akad. I.A. Orbeli, Novaja redakcija K.N. Juzbašjana, Moscow 2001.

[54] See J. Gippert, *Iraniaca Armeno-Iberica. Studien zu den iranischen Lehnwörtern*

of Eastern Georgia, who fought the Huns at Čor, near the later Darband. Varsken renounced his Christian faith (as it appears, Armenian Christianity), and embraced Zoroastrianism. He also tried to force his new religion on his wife, but in vain. Šušanik was tortured for many years, but did not apostacize and died as a Christian, to be canonized later. What interests us here are the threats uttered by Varsken to send her, riding a donkey, which is reminiscent of a Persian custom of humiliation, to Čor, or, alternatively, to the Gate[55] of the (Sasanian) King, both, apparently, implying death.

4.2 The *Vita* was composed by Šušanik's confessor Yakob Curtaveli under Pērōz, King of Kings (459–484,) and Vaxtang Gorgasal,[56] prior to 483 (less than fifty years after the Georgian alphabet was invented); this follows from the fact that in 482/3 Varsken was murdered by Vaxtang,[57] the event being still absent from the text. Hence, the only information we can gather from this text is that there were wars with the "Huns" near Darband, and that these enemies of the Sasanians were seen as bloodthirsty and barbarian enough to enable one to threaten sending someone into their hands. As this source can be dated with the precision of a couple of years, it should be stressed that the fact that the Northern barbarians in the late fifth century are called "Huns," and not "Khazars," as in many other Armenian and Georgian sources of later dates which describe the 5th century events,[58] is another indication that wherever we

im Armenischen und Georgischen, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Kl, Sitzungsberichte, 606. Band, Veröffentlichungen der Komission für Iranistik Nr. 26, hrsg. von Manfred Mayrhofer, Wien 1993, p. 207 ff.

[55] *I.e.*, the Palace. Certainly not to the Gate of Čor / Darband, as this was already mentioned. Persian *dar* means both "gate" and "palace."

[56] Vaxtang (in Persian: Varan-Xuasro-Tang), the most famous Georgian king, frequently described a "semi-legendary figure" (cf. D.M. Lang, "Iran, Armenia and Georgia," *The Cambridge History of Iran 3(1), The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, edited by Ehsan Yarshater, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, London etc. 1983, pp. 505–536, p. 521), ruled *c.* 446–510.

[57] See C. Toumanoff, "Iberia on the Eve of Bagratid Rule. An Inquiry into the Political History of Eastern Georgia between the VIth and the IXth century," *Le Muséon*, Vol. LXV (1952), pp. 17–149, pp. 199–259, p. 235. Cf. also C. Toumanoff, "The Princely Nobility of Georgia," *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. J.-P. Mahé & R.W. Thomson, Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA 1997, pp. 37–46.

[58] On the other hand, the 5th century Armenian author Ełišē, describing the contemporary events, wrote that *ca.* 459/460 the Albanian king, having united eleven Mountaineer kings, brought the hordes of *Mask'ut'*s *via* the *pahak* of Č'or, urging them to wage war against Pērōz.

find "Khazars" at such an early date, this appellation should be treated as anachronistic, and the source itself should be ascribed to a later date.[59]

V

5.1 There are two collections of Georgian chronicles: the larger and the later one is known as *The Life*[60] *of Kartli* (or *Kartlis Cxovreba* [henceforth: KC]);[61] the other, *The Conversion of Kartli*, or *Mokcevai Kartlisai* [henceforth: MK],[62] is much smaller and older. The two collections are

---

[59] Contrary to that evidence from the 5th century *Vita*, there is nothing on the Northern barbarians in the *Passion of Evstati* (Eustace) *of Mcxeta* (*floruit* 540–50), which was compiled within 30 years of the martyr's death (under Husraw I Anōšurwān or Hurmizd IV). A Georgianized Zoroastrian Persian, perhaps a native of Mcxeta and an apprentice cobbler, he converted to Christianity, changed his name from Gvirobandak (**Wīrōg-bandag*) and married a local Christian. With eight other Persian apostates, he was sent from Mcxeta to Arvand Gušnasp the *marzapan* in Tbilisi and executed. Text: *Jveli kartuli agiograp'iuli literaturis jeglebi* [*Monuments of the Old Georgian Hagiographic Literature*] I, ed. I.V. Abuladze [Abulaje] Tbilisi 1964, I, pp. 30–45; translation: "'Das Martyrium des heiligen Eustatius von Mzchetha. Aus dem Georgischen übersetzt von Dschawachoff (vorgelegt und bearbeutet von Hrn. Harnack)," *Sitzungsberichte der königlich Pruessischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, Vol. XXXVIII (1901), p. 847, pp. 875–902; D.M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*, London 1956, pp. 94–114; cmp. J.N. Birsdall, "'The Martyrdom of St. Eustathius of Mzkhetha' and the Diatessaron: An Investigation," *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 18 (1972), pp. 452–56.

[60] In the sense of *bios*, as was noted by A. Muraviev elsewhere.

[61] *Kartlis Cxovreba*, I–II, ed. S. Qauxčišvili, Tbilisi 1955; quoted (vol. I) as KC, p.…See also F. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIX^e siècle*, trans., St Petersburg 1856; cf. also W.E.D. Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, London 1932 (reprint: New York 1971); G. Pätsch, *Das Leben Kartli's. Eine Chronik aus Georgien, 300–1200*, Leipzig 1985; R.W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation. Translated with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford 1996. On Georgian literature in general: M. Tarchnishvili, *Geschichte der kirchlischen georgischen Literatur*, Vatican 1955; G. Deeters, "Georgische Literatur," *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, Abt. 1, Bd. 7: *Armenisch and kaukasische Sprachen*, Leiden 1963, pp. 129–55; K. Salia, "La littérature géorgienne," *Bedi Kartlisa. Revue de kartvélogie*, Vol. 17–26 (Paris 1964–9), esp. Vol. 17–18 (1964), pp. 28–61; H. Fähnrich, *Die georgische Literatur*, Tbilisi 1981; R. Baramidze, R., "Die Anfänge der georgischen Literatur," *Georgica*, Jena 1987, pp. 39–43; D. Rayfield, *The Literature of Georgia. A History*, Oxford 1994.

[62] See K. Lerner, *The Chronicle The Conversion of K'artli,* The Hebrew University Magness Press & Yad Y. Ben-Zvi Institute, Jerusalem 2003 [Hebrew; the translation from Old Georgian was made by this author]. This is the edition quoted here from a computerized version, without references to pages. The older edition: E.S. Takaišvili [Taqaišvili], "Obraščenije Gruzii," *Sbornik Materialov dlja opisanija mestnostej i plemën Kavkaza* XXVIII, Tiflis 1900; cf. D.M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*, London 1956, pp. 13–39; see also G. Pätsch, "Die Bekehrung Georgiens *Mokcevay Kartlisay*

composed of compositions of different character and dates. For example, the oldest Georgian chronicle, preserved as a part of MK, is attributed to a certain deacon Gregory, and perhaps goes back to the seventh century.[63]

5.2 Leonti Mroveli, the redactor of *Kartlis Cxovreba* proper (which forms only one of the parts of KC),[64] has been placed in the eighth or the eleventh century,[65] while the *History of the King Vaxtang Gorgasal*, another composition also found in KC[66] and describing the events from the 5th–6th centuries, was written in the eighth or the ninth century.[67]

5.3 KC begins with the eponyms of Caucasian nations and stories about Khazar (*Xazar*) invasions (p. 11), seen by many as a reflection of the Scythian[68] or other nomadic invaders. In its initial epic chapter, KC mentions the River Xazareti (pp. 5–6), which is perhaps the Kuma; it knows Daghestan north of Darband as Q'ivčaq'eti and / or Xazareti (p. 12); just as [Pseudo-]Xorenac'i (with whom he was, perhaps, more or less, contemporary), Leonti Mroveli projects back in time the first Khazar assaults against the Caucasian peoples (whom he called "sons

(Verfasser unbekannt)," *Bedi Kartlisa. Revue de kartvélogie*, 33 (1975), pp. 288–337; *La conversion du Kartli*, trad. E. Takaišvili, introduction and commentary by M. Čxartišvili, Tbilisi [Russian; *non vidi*]. For the Jewish setting, cf. T. Mgaloblishvili & I. Gagoshidze, "The Jewish Diaspora and Early Christianity in Georgia," *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus. Iberica Caucasica. Volume One*, ed. by T. Mgaloblishvili, Curzon Caucasus World, Richmond 1998, pp. 39–58.

[63] For dating the older strata of this composition, cmp. Z. Aleksidze, "Sur le vocabulaire de la *Conversion du Kartli*: *miap'ori*, *niap'ori* ou *minap'ori*?" *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. J.-P. Mahé & R.W. Thomson, Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA 1997, pp. 47–52.

[64] Only two or three (the first, the second, and probably, the fourth) of the six parts of KC were edited by him.

[65] K. Kekelidze (K'. K'ek'elije), *Jveli kartuli lit'erat'uris ist'oria* I, Tbilisi 1960, pp. 236 ff., dated the work as written in the 1070s.

[66] The third part.

[67] The final redaction of KC was made only in the 18th century in Moscow, by the exiled Georgian *carevič* (Russian for "prince-of-blood") Vahušti (or, Vaxušti) Bagrationi (Bagration).

[68] S.S. Kakabadze (K'ak'abaje), "Nekotoryje voprosy xronologii Drevnej Kartli po gruzinskim istočnikam," *Palestinskij Sbornik* 13 (76), 1965, pp. 114–125, p. 117 n. 23. Cf. also L.M. Melikset-Bek, "Xazary po drevnearmjanskim istočnikam v svjazi s problemoj Moiseja Xorenskogo," *Issledovanija po istorii kul'tury narodov Vostoka. Sbornik v čest' akademika I.A. Orbeli*, Moscow-Leningrad 1960, pp. 112–118; I. Aliyev, "O skifax i skifskom carstve v Azerbajdžane," *Peredneaziatskij Sbornik III. Istorija i filologija stran drevnego Vostoka*, "Nauka," Moscow 1979, pp. 4–14.

of Targamos / Togarma"),[69] while using motifs derived from the Persian epic traditions to describe them. In his version, the Caucasian peoples, united, pushed the Khazars back and proceded into their own territory in Daghestan, which is also reminiscent of Xorenac'i's account of Vnasēp Surhap's expedition (cf. 1.2 above). But the Khazars appointed a king to whom all of them submitted, and were successful in progressively pillaging all the Transcaucasian countries, using for their razziahs both the Darial and the Darband passages (pp. 11–12). However, the Caucasian peoples were delivered by the Persian Apridon (**Afrīdōn* / *Ferīdūn*) and by Ardam, a descendant of Nebrot, who is Biblical Nimrod[70] (pp. 12–13).

Whilst anachronistic and legendary, this account falls well into the framework of the events of the seventh / eighth centuries.[71] The source also describes the Ossetes (whose name derives from the Georgian name for the Alans, the North-Caucasian people best-known to the Georgians throughout their history) as the descendants of Uobos, one of the sons

[69] Ultimately derived from a Greek version of Genesis. It is worth noting that both the Caucasian Christians (especially, the Armenians) and the Judaized Khazars (cf. in the beginning of the Hebrew letter of the Khazar king Joseph, for the texts, see P.K. Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska v X veke*, Leningrad 1932) boasted their descent from Biblical Togarma. Even though finding a pseudo-Biblical genealogy was one of the favorite themes of almost all medieval authors who ever mentioned the Khazar (cf. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, p. 12), the question arises why this particular genealogy was picked up? Was it because *Togarma* sounds similar to *Türk*? Because of the Turkic-sounding ending *-ma*? Because of the Turkic roots with the meaning "to be tough, sturdy;" "to be born;" "to be straight, honest, upright, true"? (see Sir Gerald Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, Oxford 1972, pp. 472–3; as to such popular etymologies, cf. Qaraim Judaeo-Turkic *togarma*, "rod, roždenije, proisxoždenije; ród, urodzenie, pochodzenie," see *Karaimsko-russko-pol'skij slovar'* / *Słownik karaimsko-rosyjsko-polski*, ed. N.A. Baskakov, A. Zajączkowski, S.M. Szapszał, Moscow 1974, p. 533. Compare now D. Shapira, "Judaization of Central Asian Traditions as Reflected in the so-called Jewish-Khazar Correspondence, with Two Excurses: A. Judah Halevy's Quotations; B. Eldad Ha-Dani", *Khazars*, ed. V. Petrukhin, W. Moskovich, A. Fedorchuk, A. Kulik, D. Shapira (Jews and Slavs, vol. 16*)*, Jerusalem: Gesharim-Moscow: Mosty Kul'tury 2005), pp. 503–521, esp. p. 511. Or because it was claimed for themselves also by the neighboring Armenians and other Caucasian Christians?

[70] In Georgian literature, there is an apocryphal 'Book of Nimrod', seen as the ancestor of the native kings, see M. J̌anašvili, "Izgnanije Adama iz Raja, Kniga Nimroda i Sem' Poslepotopnyx Narodov," *Sbornik Materialov dlja opisaniia mestnostej i plemën Kavkaza*, vypusk 29, Tiflis 1901.

[71] Cf. K. Czeglédy, "Khazar Raids in Transcaucasia in A.D. 762–764," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae* XI (1960), pp. 75–88; K. Czeglédy, "Bemerkungen zur Geschichte der Chazaren," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae* XIII (1961), pp. 243–251.

of the afore-mentioned Khazar king (p. 12), thus underlining the well established alliance—albeit of later times—between the Khazars and the Alans.

5.4 Another tradition, deriving from an Armenian version of the Persian epic, describes the wars waged in the Caucasus against the Turks, Armenians and Georgians by Kekapos, Paraborot and Kaixosro (Iranian **Kay-Kāwūs, *Farraburz* and **Kay-Husraw*); this may be reminiscent of the turbulent years of Bahrām Čōbēn.[72] A small party of the Turks settled among the Georgians, their allies, helping them against the Persians, and their settlement was called Sark'ine, which means in Georgian "iron."[73] Later, these immigrants were labeled "*bun-Turks*," which was translated as "etheo-Turks," from the Persian word "*bun*," known in different forms also in Armenian and Georgian.[74]

Since then, Georgians have given refuge to oppressed people fleeing from Greece, Syria or *Khazaria*, for the sake of their help against the Persians (KC, p. 15),[75] with the next chapter dedicated to the legendary history of Jewish immigration into Georgia:

mašin Nabukodonosor mepeman c'armost' q'uena Ierusalemi da munit ot'ebulni [H]uriani movides Kartls da moitxoves Mcxetelta mamasaxlisisagan kueq'ana xark'ita.[76] *Misca da dasxna Aragvsa zeda c'q'arosa romelsa hkwian Zanavi. Da romeli kue q'ana akunda mat xark'ita ac' hkwian Xerk' xark'isa mistwis* (KC, pp. 15–16),

"Then Nabuchadnezzar the king captured Jerusalem and the Jews[77] who escaped from there (Jerusalem) came to Kartli and asked the head

[72] Compare M. Bíró, "Bahrām Čōbīn and the Establishment of the Principality in Kartli," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae* XXXIII.2 (1979), pp. 177–185.

[73] As "iron" in Hebrew is "*barzel*," one student of the things Khazar, obsessed with Barsils—one of the groups important in the earliest stages of the Khazar ethnic history—sought here a masked name of the imagined "Judaized Barsils."

[74] I think another Iranian etymology is possible (again, this meaning also exists in both Armenian and Georgian), namely, from the Persian word for "military or royal camp," meaning thus something like "royal Turks;" it is to be remembered that as a loanword from Iranian, *bun* is attested already in Old Turkic, see Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, p. 347. For different views, cf. P. Golden, "Cumanica I: The Qipčaqs in Georgia," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* IV (1984), pp. 45–87, p. 51 n. 17.

[75] Compare the beginning of the "Schechter Document," see notes 3–4 above.

[76] A common Near Eastern word for the land-tax, ultimately of Akkadian origin.

[77] Georgian for "Jew" is a loan word: Aramaic *[yə]hūḏ-* > Parthian / Armenian *huṛ*> Georgian *[x/h]uri*. Ossetic *uirag* also belongs here; compare Judaeo-Tati *ĵuhur*.

of Mcxeta for some land in exchange for payment of tribute. (He) gave (to them some) and settled them along the river Aragvi, near / on the fountain,[78] called Zanavi.[79] And they had land in exchange for payment of this tax, and thus it was called "Xerk" [*sic!*] because of the tax."

5.5 Interestingly enough, Leonti Mroveli informs us straight afterwards that previously it was Armenian, and not Georgian, that was then spoken in Kartli,[80] thus reflecting old Armenian influence on Eastern Georgia. After a short pseudo-historical interpolation about **Asfandiyār* / *Ardašīr Pābagān*, Mroveli states that, in fact, *six* languages were spoken in Kartli in ancient times, namely, Armenian, Georgian, *Khazar* (Xazar), Syriac, Hebrew and Greek. These garbled traditions cannot be dated (though one may venture to suggest that they stem from an era characterized by a rather friendly attitude to the Khazars and by close Armeno-Georgian ties), but there is perhaps a kernel of historical truth in these accounts which combine the arrival of both Khazars and Jews in Kartli.[81] In later, but still legendary, times, Khazar incursions were still frequently mentioned. They are entirely anachronistic, of course, and the references to them were made due to the substitution of real Khazar razziahs of not so remote (for Mroveli, or his source[s]) times for ancient nomadic inroads. It should be noted, however, that this Georgian source uses "Turks" and "Khazars" as synonyms, frequently referring also to Ossetes, alongside with "Khazars." We then have two diverse accounts about Alexander's conquests in Kartli: the first, that these savage Bun-Turks *and* Qıpčaqs[82] resisted the king in their castles, which included Urbnisi, K'asp'i, Uplis-cixe, Mxceta, Ojraqe, Sark'ine, Cixe Didi and Zanavi "the quarter of the Jews" (*ubani [H]uriata*); whereas, according to the second account, unable to stand up to Alexander, they escaped to the Caucasus (KC,

[78] The case is problematic.

[79] Some scholars provided this toponym with a Hebrew etymology (*zānāb*, "tail"), which seems to me untenable.

[80] Leonti Mroveli himself appears to have had a command of Armenian, Greek and Persian, cf. Rayfield, *The Literature of Georgia*, p. 57.

[81] The 30s–40s of the 7th century were a unique period during which the Jews fleeing the Byzantine Empire as a consequence of religious persecution could have met in Transcaucasia with North-Caucasian Turks / Khazars; cf. further.

[82] There is also a reference to *Čerkez* in this context, cf. Golden, "Cumanica I: The Qipčaqs in Georgia," pp. 54–5, with bibliography. Were these traditions about Qıpčaqs interpolated into the extant text after the Georgian king David the Rebuilder initiated, in 1118, a massive imigration of Qıpčaqs into Georgia?

pp. 17–18). Later on, anachronistically again, Khazars feature prominently in the latest part of KC (*History of King Vaxtang Gorgasal*, composed by J̌uanšer).

5.6 The structure of these initial chapters of KC is very similar to both Xorenac'i's accounts mentioned above, and to the initial chapter of MK, which elaborates the *Romance of Alexander*; according to the version of MK, Alexander forced the brethren of the Children of Biblical Lot (*i.e.*, the impure Ammonites and Moabites)[83] into the Land of Qedar.[84] This is, of course, an old and well-known tradition about the enclosed nations,[85] but it is worth noting that, as far as I know, there is no other tradition which identifies the enclosed nations with Qedar; although, on the other hand, it should be admitted, the Khazars and other Pontic Türks, like the Crimean and Noqai Tatars, were sometimes identified with the people of Qedar, especially in the late Hebrew sources.[86]

[83] Compare KC: Jews.

[84] Compare KC: Kartli. Was the phonetic similarity evoked, too?

[85] Cf. G. Gary, *The Medieval Alexander*, Cambridge 1956. The Khazars were especially mentioned as one of the nations enclosed by Alexander, see, for instance, Druthmar of Aquitaine, "Expositio in Matthaeum Evangelistam" (ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*, Series Latina, Vol. 106 (Paris 1864), col. 1456: *nam et in Gog et Mogog, que sunt gentes Hunorum, quae ab eis Gazari vocantur, iam una gens quae fortior erat ex his quas Alexander conduxerat*, "for in the lands of Gog and Magog who are a Hunnish race and call themselves Gazari there is one tribe, a very belligerent one, and Alexander enclosed them."

[86] Besides the obvious fact that both the Biblical *Qedar* (from the Hebrew root which means "dark") and the Khazars were pastoralists, other factors were at work here, among them, the phonetic similarity between *QDR* and *KaZaR*. The phonetic and semantic similarity was also behind the confusion between *Kedari* and the phonetically and semantically close *črdileodi* (which means "Northern" in Georgian) by the Georgian authors of MK, who used these ethnonyms indiscriminately with *Bun-Turks* and with *honni* (Huns); see also G. Pätsch, "Die Bekehrung Georgiens Mokcevay Kartlisay (Verfasser unbekannt)," *Bedi Kartlisa. Revue de kartvélogie*, 33 (1975), pp. 288–337, p. 290 n. 1: *kedari*, "dunkel," quoting the classical dictionary by Sulxan-Saba Orbeliani; on the usage of *črdilo*, "North; darkness", cf. *idem*, p. 294 and n. 26. [To be noted in passing: the land of Khazars was called *the Northern country* also in Slavonic, cmp. *paki otide na* ***Severs'skuju*** *stranu vŭ* ***Kozary*** (*Vita Cyrilllii*; cf. interesting remarks on this work in: M. van Esbroeck, "La substrait hagiographique de la mission Khazare de Constantin-Cyrille," *Analecta Bollandiana* 104 (1986), pp. 337–348.] In some Christian traditions the name of the Biblical *Qedar* coalesced with that of the historical Kidarite Huns, named after their king Kidara (known to our Georgian compiler from Priscus). On the problematics involved, see A.D.H. Bivar, "The History of Eastern Iran," *The Cambridge History of Iran* 3(1), *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, edited by Ehsan Yarshater, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, London etc. 1983, 181–231, p. 212; cf. W.B. Henning, "A Farewell to the Khagan of the Aq-Aqatārān," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental*

Immediately after having expelled the brethren of the Children of Lot, Alexander encountered a savage people in central Kartli, brethren to the Jebusites,[87] called *Bun-Turk*s, but he was unable to conquer them, and retreated. Then there came to Kartli valiant men, Huns, or Jews, or Indians[88] (there is a graphic possibility to read the word in three ways: *honni* / *horni* / *hindni*),[89] who fled from the Chaldaeans,[90] and they asked

---

and African Studies 14.3 (1952), 501–522 (= *Acta Iranica* 15, *W.B. Henning Selected Papers* II, Liége 1977, 387–408). Other Christian traditions (Methodius of Patharene) confused *Qedar* with the name of the Sons of *Qəṭūrāh* (*Ketura*), who were taken to be the Ismaelites concealed by Gideon, after the model of the Romance of Alexander. As a result, the Sons of *Qəṭūrāh* were seen as mighty men residing in the Caucasus, and in the 10th century CE, the Armenian Catholicos John of Drasxanakert wrote (Yovhanes Drasxanakerc'i, *Patmout'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. M. Emin, Moscow 1853; Tiflis 1912, p. 24 (iv.6); translation: rev. K.H. Maksoudian, *Ovhannes Drasxanakerc'i, History of Armenia*, Scholars Press, Atlanta 1990, p. 72): "And Arshak the brave (*k'aj*) of the child of Abraham from the progeny of *Qəṭūrāh* (*i Kēturakan cnndoc'*), whom he took as his wife after the death of Sarah, becomes king of the Persians and the Medes and the Babylonians, and is named Parthian (*Part'ew*), that is, "force" (*bṛnout'iwn*; Maksoudian: "vehemence"), see J.R. Russell, "The Name of Zoroaster in Armenian," *Journal of Society for Armenian Studies*, Vol. 2 (1985–6), pp. 3–10, p. 7. A different version of the legend of the Sons of *Qəṭūrāh* appears in the Jewish literature (the City of *Qīṭōr*, in the *Targūm Šēnī* to Esther, is located in the *South; Qīṭōr* which might mean in Hebrew "steam," or "bond," may be a rendering, by a *Volksetymologie*, of Iranian *band*, "fortress" (like in Dar-*band*), or of an Iranian form close to Kurdish *diz* / *dež*, "fortress," wrongly analyzed as if from *dūd*, "smoke." Among Iranian Christians, on the other hand, *Bēṯh Qiṭrāyē*, "Islands" (Soqotra?) was known to be a bishopric.

[87] Compare the reference to Jerusalem in the version of KC.

[88] There are old traditions, which form part of the Alexander Cycle, connecting Jews with India, cf. L. Wallach, "Alexander the Great and the Indian Gymnosophistes in Hebrew Tradition," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, Vol. XI (1951), pp. 47–83. As is well known, "Indians" might stand for "Ethiopians."

[89] MK reads *honni* instead of "Jews" ([*x*]*uriani*) in KC. It was E.S. Takaišvili [Taqaišvili], "Obraščenije Gruzii," *Sbornik Materialov dlja opisanija mestnostej i plemën Kavkaza* XXVIII, Tiflis 1900, p. 5, who noted that the correct reading must be not *honni*, but *xuriani*, "Hebrews." The *Vorlage* had a *tilde*, while *o* and *u* interchange frequently in the Xucuri alphabet; the text in question has both *xuria* / *xoria*, "Jew," Nom. Sng; *xuriani* / *xoriani*, Nom. Pl.; *xuriata* / *xoriata*, Gen.Pl. (*passim*) , as was noted by Prof. K. Lerner; compare also *Iebo̲s* for *Jebus* (*Iebous*). The mention of Jebusites, as the former inhabitants of the region, looks strange, but it may be that the Amalekites are hinted at; it is perhaps worth comparing them to Mroveli's reference to the Armenian language as formerly spoken in Kartli, as Armenians frequently boasted, besides their origin from Togarma, also their Amalekite progeny (*the firstborn of nations!*), because Armenians believed that their country was the first nation to adopt Christianity as the state-religion.

However, though there is no doubt that under *honni* here Jews are meant, the reading *honni* can be original. It may reflect the later fate of the Jews in question who migrated to the *Huns*, *i.e.*, to the North-Caucasian nomads (including, probably, Khazars).

[90] The Chaldaeans' arrival in Kartli is mentioned in the Alexander episode also in KC, p. 17. Compare Nebuchadnezzar's role in KC, cf. above. Here we find traces of a blurred *Georgian* tradition combining "Chaldaeans" persecuting Jews as a factor in the Jewish

the ruler of the Bun-Turks to allot them a piece of land near Sark'ine. Later, they emigrated, and the text does not tell us where they went to. However, one is tempted to connect this migration with the flight of Jews from Armenia to Khazaria, as the Schechter Document suggests. Another possibility is to see in these traditions some remote memory of the forced immigration of Savirs from Caucasian Albania into Byzantian Georgia *ca.* 575.[91]

P'irvel odes Aleksandre mepeman natesavni igi lotis šviltani c'arikcina da šeqadna igini K'edarsa mas kue q'anasa ixilna natesavni sast'ik'ni Bun-Turkni msxdomareni mdinaresa zeda Mt'k'uarsa mixuevit, otx kalakad, da dabnebi mati: Sark'ine kalaki, K'asp'i, Urbnisi da Ojraqe da cixeni matni: Cixe Didi Sark'inisay, Upliscixe K'asp'isa, Urbnisisa da Ojraqisay. Dauk'wirda Aleksandres da cna rametu Ieboselta natesavni i q'vnes, q'ovelsa qorcielsa č'amdes da samare mati ara i q'o,

Mk'udarsa šešč'amdes. Da ver ejlo brjolay mati mepesa, da c'arvida. Mašin movides natesavni mbrjolni, Kaldeveltagan gamosxmulni, Honni, da itxoves Bun-Turkta uplisagan kue q'anay xark'ita. Da dasxdes igini Zanavs da ep' q'ra igi, romel xark'ita akunda, hrqwian mas Xerk'i. Da šemdgomad raodenisame žamisa movida Aleksandre, mepey q'ovlisa kue q'anisay, da dale c'na samni ese kalakni da cixeni, da honta dasca maxwili, xolo Sark'inesa kalaksa ebrjoda atertmet' tuey da dadga Sark'inesa dasavalitk'erjo. Da dasca venaqi da ruy gamoiğo[92] *Ksnit, da dasxnak'acni moruveni dast'agita ruysayta,*[93] *da hrkwian adgilsa mas Nast'agisi. Da merme gamoiğo sark'ine. Twit da q'ares da meot' ikmnnes.*

"First, when Alexander the King drove aside the nation (seed) of the Sons of Lot and forced / locked[94] them into the Land of Qedar, he noted the furious[95] nation (seed) of Bun-Turk sitting along the course of the

migration to the North *via* "Armīnīya" (as in the lost part of the Cambridge Document; see notes 3–4 above) with some remote memory of the Jewish migration from the South, from Northern Mesopotamia ("the land of Chaldaeans"), most likely from Adiabene.

[91] See M.I. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, p. 127.

[92] *Ruy*, from Iranian *rūd* / *rūy*.

[93] These two words used to pose a problem to Kartvelogists. They are, however, two Iranian loan-words, **dastagirt*, and **rūy*, belonging to two different chronological strata of Iranian: **dastagirt* is early Middle Iranian, while **rūy* is Late Middle Iranian / New Persian.

[94] The correct meaning of the verb, as Prof. K. Lerner kindly noted, is disputed.

[95] Georgian *sast'ik'i*, from Iranian. It is perhaps of interest that one of the meanings of the word in question can be rendered in Hebrew as **qōḏēr*.

Kura (Mt'k'uari), as it meanders, in four towns and their settlements: the city of Sark'ine, K'asp'i, Urbnisi and Ojraqe and their fortresses: the great fortress (Cixe-Dide) of Sark'ine, the royal fortresses (Upliscixe) of K'asp'i,[96] of Urbnisi and of Ojraqe. Alexander was amazed, and he learned that they were from the seed of the Jebusites, ate from every (kind of) flesh and had no interment, having eaten dead matter [= KC]. The King was not able to fight them and departed [= KC]. Then came a mighty nation, exiled from the (land of) the Chaldaeans,[97] the Honns [KC: Jews], and they asked the ruler of Bun-Turks [KC: the ruler of Mcxeta] for some land in exchange for tribute. And they settled in Zanavi and possessed it, acquiring it by paying the tax (*xark'i*), (thus the place) became called Xerk'i. And after some time, came Alexander, the king of the whole Earth, and destroyed[98] these three cities and fortresses and struck his sword against the Honns. He fought only against the city of Sark'ine for 11 months [= KC] and he encamped to the west of Sark'ine. And he struck (planted) a vineyard and drew a rivulet from Ksani and he settled (there) men to keep the *dastagird* of the brook, and they called the place Nast'agisi.[99] After that he conquered Sark'ine. (Then) themselves abandoned (it) and fled."

5.7 The differences between both versions are evident. In MK, the *Bun-Turks* are mentioned as those who ruled the Aragvi-Mt'k'uari-Zanavi region, while in the KC version, the ruler is one anonymous *mamasaxlisa* of Mcxeta; the *Honni*, that is, the Jews, are said in MK to come from the Chaldaeans, and not to have escaped from Jerusalem; further, the mention of the Jebusites as the former inhabitants of the region seems really odd, but it might be the Amalekites who are hinted at.[100] It should be observed that it is the version of MK that is Judaizing (some say,

[96] The Genitive case of the last three toponyms is erroneous.

[97] In KC, they appear in the same place in text, but have no role to play.

[98] The Georgian verb is identical semantically to Armenian *atnēm*, "dissipate, consume." Does it imply an Armenian *Vorlage* or rather a common background and semantic interaction?

[99] A popular etymology. The letters D and N are not similar in either Georgian, Armenian, or any other relevant alphabet. KC, p. 18: *da daadginna laškari imier da amier, zemot da kuemot, da twit dadga Ksanis zeda, adgilsa, romelsa hkwian Nast'ak'isi*, "he posted his army to either side, above and below, and took up his position at the Ksan, at a place called Nast'ak'i," transl. by Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation. Translated with Introduction and Commentary*, p. 24.

[100] Cf. n. 89.

representing an earlier Jewish Christianity),[101] whereas the reference to "Jews," not "Honns," is found in the version of the later KC.

The material found in these two Georgian traditions is of little value, as the information found in them is legendary, blurred and undatable. However, one observation may nevertheless be of interest: the redactors of these initial chapters of MK and KC felt (as did the author of the *History* of the Armenian [pseudo-]Xorenac'i) that the Transcaucasian Jews used to have something in common with the North-Caucasian Turkic nomads.

6.0 In the most important text dealing[102] with Khazars they were, however, called "Turks," which is correct for the period that our source describes, for in the period under consideration, Khazars could still not be distinguished from the Western Turks, or "Türküts."

6.1 Fighting against the armies of Yazdigird II the Sasanian, the Armenians and Georgians did not participate actively in the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and did not endorse the decisions made there, wrongly identifying them later with the teachings of Nestorius.[103] They accepted the compromising *Henotikon* of the Emperor Zeno (481/2 C.E.) under the *Katholikos* Babgen (490–515),[104] but when the Imperial Church returned to the Chalcedon formula in 518, they rejected it, and in 554 or 555 the Greek Church itself—apparently, on hierarchial basis—,[105]

---

[101] However, the reference found in KM to the non-Israelite Palestinian nations ("brethren of the Children of Lot; Jebusites") identified with inhabitants of the land of Qedar in the Northern Caucasus and with Bun-Turks is appealing. Should the reader realize that, although having some Jewish / Biblical connections, these Northern nomads are not the true Israel?

[102] And, I would add, the very first possible Georgian episode, chronologically speaking (though, of course, anachronistic).

[103] Cf. W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*, Cambridge University Press 1979 (1st ed.: 1972), p. 313. It should be remembered that Nestorius' supporters believed that *their* views were vindicated by the Chalcedon Council. Another reason for the Armenian rejection of Chalcedon was purely linguistic: Armenian, at that time, had only one term, *p'nout'iwn*, for both *phusis* and *hypostasis*, and only much later a new term for *phusis*, *ew'iwn* or *koiout'iwn*, was coined.

[104] Apparently, in 491, cf. now also N.G. Garsoïan (Garsojan), "Byl li sozvan Sobor v Val'aršapate v 491 godu?," *Xristianskij Vostok* NS 2 (8), St. Peterburg—Moscow 2001, pp. 116–120.

[105] N.G. Adontc, *Armenija v époxu Justiniana. Političeskoje sostojanije na osnove naxararskogo stroja* (Jerevan 1971), pp. 343–344.

not only her doctrine, was anathematized at the Second Dwin Synod under the *Katholikos* Narsēs II (548–557). Beginning from 591, Persarmenia, Albania and Kartli were under direct Persian domination, and the Byzantines established a Chalcedonite Armenian Catholicosate at Awan, to confront the Monophysite one at Persian Duin.[106] In 606–8, the Georgians, under their *Katholikos* Kyrion, adopted Byzantine Orthodoxy, to which they had been inclined since the late 6th century, and it was then that the deep cultural split between the Armenians and the Georgians began, after Abraham I the Armenian (607–615) excommunicated Kyrion and the Georgians at Dwin in 609.[107] As a result, and

---

[106] Sebēos, p. 91; V.A. Arutjunova-Fidanjan, *Armjano-vizantijskaja kontaktnaja zona (X–XI vv.). Rezul'taty vzaimodejstvija kul'tur*, Moscow 1994, pp. 60–61.

[107] See, *e.g.*, Uxtanēs Episkopos, *Patmoutʻiwn Hayocʻ, hatouacʻ erkrord. Patmoutʻiwn bažanman Vracʻ i Hayocʻ*, Vałaršapat 1871; *Girkʻ Tʻłtʻocʻ* [Book of Letters], ed. Y. Izmereanc', Tiflis 1901 (translation of the material relevant for this discussion in: N. Garsoïan, *L'église arménienne et le grand schism d'Orient*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 574, Subsidia, Tomus 100, Lovanii 1999, pp. 516–583; see also pp. 355–398); L. Melikʻsētʻ-Bek, *Vracʻ ałbyournerə Hayastani i hayeri masin*, Erevan 1934; Uxtanesi, *Istʾoris gamoqʾopisat Kartvelta da Somextgan*, ed. Z. Aleksidze [Aleksize], Tbilisi 1975 [*non vidi*]; Arseni Sapareli, *Ganqʾopisatwis Kartvelta da Somexta* [*The Split between Georgia and Armenia*], ed. Z. Aleksidze [Aleksize], Tbilisi 1980. However, there were also numerous Armenian Chalcedonians, primarily, within the Empire (Byzantine Armenia); though the literature on this subject is vast, one may be referred to the classic article by N.Ja. Marr, "Arkaun, mongol'skoje nazvanie xristian v svjazi s voprosom ob armjanax-xalkidonitax," *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 12.1–4 (1906), pp. 1–68, now republished in *Kavkazskij Kul'turnyj Mir i Armenija*, Erevan 1995, pp. 209–276; A.P. Každan, *Armjane v sostave gospodstvujuščego klassa Vizantii XI–XII vv.*, Moscow 1974, p. 145 ff.; see now V.A. Arutjunova-Fidanjan, *Armjano-vizantijskaja kontaktnaja zona (X–XI vv.). Rezul'taty vzaimodejstvija kul'tur*; cf. also, *e.g.*, V.A. Arutjunova-Fidanjan, "The Ethnoconfessial Self-awareness of Armenian Chalcedonians," *Revue des etudes Arméniennes*, 21 (1988–89), pp. 345–363; see also V.P. Stepanenko, "Pakuriany v Vizantii. K debatam ob étničeskoj prinadležnosti t.n. armjano-iverskix familij," *Xristianskij Vostok* NS 2 (8), St. Peterburg & Moscow 2001, pp. 255–276. An important Armeno-Chalcedonite source from the 7th century is *Narratio De Rebus Armeniae* (see G. Garitte, *La Narratio De Rebus Armeniae*, *CSLO 132*, Subsidia 4, Louvain 1952); compare now G. Garitte, "La source grecque des 'Trente articles' géorgiens contre les Arméniens," *Handes Amsorya* (1–2) 1976. On Armenian Chalcedonites in the land of Vṛkan (Kartli, Georgia) *marzpan*ate who refused to become converted to Monophysism by order, see V. Arutjunova-Fidanjan, "'I Smbatai' or 'I Spahan'? Sebēos, ch. 25," *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. J.-P. Mahé & R.W. Thomson, Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA 1997, pp. 151–164, esp. pp. 161–162. On Armeno-Georgian Church relations in the 6th century, cf. important rematks in: M. Tarchnišvili, "Sources arméno-géorgiennes de l'histoire ancienne de l'Église de Géorgie," *Le Muséon*, 60 (1947), pp. 29–50, and in: B. Martin-Hisard, "Jalons pour une histoire du culte de Sainte Nino (fin IV^{e}–XIII^{e} s.)," *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. Mahé & Thomson, pp. 53–78, pp. 69–70. Under Heraclius, the Armenian Church reunited though with the Orthodox (629), but after the Arab Muslim onslaught, they

given the traditional rivalry between the two nations, the mere memory of the form of Christianity once shared by Georgians and Armenians (and Albanians) was suppressed in Georgian sources, and in fact, practically all the extant Georgian literature originates *after* the split. During the reign of Husraw II Parwēz, the Sasanian Empire favored the Monophysites rather than the traditionally tolerated Nestorian[108] branch of Christianity[109] (dubbed "the Church of Persia"), presumably, because of the influence of Šīrīn, the Armenian wife of the King of Kings immortalized by Persian poets (*Xusraw-o Šīrīn*), so, in 614, after Jerusalem was captured by the Sasanian Persians,[110] they tried to impose the anti-Chalcedonian leadership on all the Christians in their realm, including those in the territories conquered from the Byzantines. We know next to nothing about the effect this Imperial decision had in Georgia, although this event certainly has importance for Khazar studies. However, in 625/6, when Heraclius and his "Khazar" allies besieged Tbilisi, the city was defended by its local Georgian Christian ruler subject to Iran, and by a Persian garrison under a Persian officer. It seems that the genuine account of these events was lost, if it ever existed in a written form in Georgian, because for the later Georgian readers the prospect that their ruler had probably abandoned what was seen since then as the core of Georgian identity, was deemed to be offensive. The period between 606–629 was a religiously embarrassing period for them, thus

relapsed into their national church and again denounced Chalcedon at Dwin in 645. But the final separation followed only the Manazkert Synod of 726, see N. Adontc, *Armenija v époxu Justiniana*, p. 338; V.A. Arutjunova-Fidanjan, *Armjano-vizantijskaja kontaktnaja zona (X–XI vv.)*, p. 62. Cf. now also G. Babian, *The relations between the Armenian and the Georgian Churches according to the Armenian Sources, 300–610*, Antelias, Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia 2001.

[108] In this context, it is interesting to note that according to Kirakos Ganjakec'i (*Patmout'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. K. Melik'-Ohanjanian, Erevan 1961, p. 51), in 588, Nestorian Syrians came to Armenia, trying to spread their "heresy" and having translated their books (including Mani's Interpretation of the Gospel!) into Armenian.

[109] See V.G. Lukonin, *Drevnij i ranesrednevekovyj Iran. Očerki istorii kul'tury*, Moscow 1987 ("Xosrov II i Anaxita," pp. 177–206), p. 205.

[110] Of importance is the Georgian text of the *Conquest of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614*, by Antiochus the Strategius of St. Saba, which was translated from Arabic prior to the 10th century; edited and translated (with Arabic extracts) in N. Marr, *Teksty i razyskanija po armjano-gruzinskoj filologii* [*Textes et recherches sur la philologie arméno-géorgienne*], kniga IX (St. Peterburg 1909), pp. XI–82 (preface), a–iv (Georgian text), 1–66 (Russian translation), 10–3 (Arabic text); cf. now also G. Garitte, *La prise de Jerusalem par les perses en 614*, CSCO 202–203, Scriptori Iberici, tomi 11–12, Louvain 1960 (Georgian text and Latin translation).

the sources would have been rewritten anew. I will argue that both Georgian accounts about the joint Byzantine-"Khazar" siege of Tbilisi drew upon Armenian sources and were composed long after the events they describe.[111]

6.2 In fact, our best Greek source, Theophanes,[112] reports the events that led to the siege on Tbilisi as follows: the Persians sought to orchestrate an attack on Constantinopole by the Western Huns, called Avars, Bulgars, Slavs and Gepids. In reaction, Heraclius, while in Lazica, invited "the Turks from the East called Khazars"[113] to become his allies. Theophanes calls them indiscriminately either "Khazars," or "Turks;"[114] they broke through the Caspian Gates and, under their *stratēgos Ziebēl*, who was second to their *Xagan*, they invaded Azerbaydjan (Adra'gan). Heraclius set out from Lazica and joined them. Both leaders met under the walls of Tbilisi; Ziebēl, seeing the Emperor, rushed to him, kissed his

[111] Marquart, *Streifzüge*, p. 394 n. 2, noted that the account in the Georgian Chronicle is secondary. Cf. Sebēos, pp. 124–132; Albanian Chronicle ii.11–12; Pseudo-Šapuh 53–71 (see R.W. Thomson, "The Anonymous Story-Teller (Also Known as "Pseudo-Šapuh")," *Revue des études arméniennes* NS 21 (1988–89), 171–232). On traces of the pre-Chalcedonite Christianity in Georgia in the context of Jerusalemite traditions, compare interesting remarks in: V.M. Lurje (Lourié), "Iz Ierusalima v Aksum Čerez Xram Solomona: arxaičnyje predanija o Sione i Kovčege Zaveta v sostave *Kebra Negest* i ix transljacija čerez Konstantinopol'," *Xristianskij Vostok* II (VIII) (2000), pp. 137–207, p. 177–8 and n. 101.

[112] The monastic and iconophilic chronicler, Theophanes the Confessor (752/758–818), continued the work of George Syncellus (d. 810/811). Syncellus' Chronicle begins from Adam and goes up to 284 C.E., whilst that of Theophanes describes the events between 284–813 C.E. His source on the Khazars was composed ca. 720 at the latest. His work is wanting in chronological accuracy; besides, as to the problem under consideration, it should be remembered that he was born more than a century after Heraclius' triumph. On the chronological problems in Heraclius' Caucasian campaigns, see E. Geland, "Die persische Feldzüge des Kaisers Heracleios," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Vol. 3 (1894), pp. 330–373; V.V. Bolotov, "K istorii imperatora Iraklija," *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, Vol. XIV (1909), pp. 68–124; Ja.A. Manandjan, "Maršruty persidskix poxodov imp. Iraklija," *Vizantijskij Vremennik* (NS), Vol. III (1950), pp. 133–153; A.N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seveneth Centur, I: 602–634*, Amsterdam 1968, p. 150 ff.; J. Howard-Johnston, "The Official History of Heraclius' Persian Campaigns," *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*, ed. E. Dabrowa, Cracow 1994, pp. 57–87; *idem*., "Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire," *War in History* 6 (1999), pp. 1–44; C. Zuckerman, "Heraclius in 625," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 60 (2002), pp. 189–197.

[113] It was observed that KC, p. 223, identifies them in the same context as "Turks from the *West*," see Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, pp. 58, 188.

[114] Sebēos (ed. Patkanov, p. 22) names them *T'eatalac'ik'*, "Hephtalites."

neck (or, stretched his neck, *kataspázetai autou tòn tráchēlon*), and prostrated himself, while the Persians looked on from the town of *Tiphilios*. The entire army of the Turks fell flat with their faces downwards and stretched out on their faces, reverenced the emperor with honor unknown among alien nations,[115] etc.; Ziebēl, seeking perhaps the royal charisma of Heraclius, presented to the Emperor his son; he gave the Emperor 40,000 brave men and returned to his country. Heraclius, with the Khazars, proceeded to Persia, etc.

Ziebēl was thus not the Khazar Qagan, but second in rank,[116] surely not on the same royal footing with Heraclius; his son can be easily identified with the *šad*[117] known from other sources. The participation of Ziebēl in the siege was short, and that of Heraclius even shorter; the defenders of the city included Persians (it is uncertain, whether exclusively so, or mostly Persians). Theophanes does not mention the sack of Tbilisi and dates all these events to one year, 6117 AM, 625/6 C.E., but it is known that his chronology is erroneous.[118]

6.3 It is to be observed that such an excellent Armenian source as Sebēos, writing only a couple of decades after the Byzantine-"Khazar" *entente* in Transcaucasia, does not mention the sack of Tbilisi at all.[119]

---

[115] Similar descriptions of Turkish reverence offered to foreign rulers are found elsewhere in Chinese sources.

[116] On this title and possible identifications, see Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, pp. 187 ff.; 218–9.

[117] See Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, p. 206 ff.

[118] *Cronografía. Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols., Lipsiae 1883 (reprint: Hildesheim 1963), pp. 308 ff., 315 l. 1–15; p. 315 l. 20–p. 316 l. 16 (the events of 624/5, including the siege on Tbilisi); pp. 328.13–329.1 (the events of 627/8, including, Heraclius in Palestine and persecution of the Jews); translations:*The Chronicle of Theophanes. An English Translation of anni mundi 6095–6305 (A.D. 602–813), with introduction and notes, by Harry Turtledove*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1982, p. 17 ff.; *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History A.D. 284–813, Translated with Introduction and Commentary by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott with the assistance of Geoffrey Greatrex*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1997.

[119] It is impossible to relate here the complicated problems surrounding this work; cf. A.P. Novosel'cev, *Xazarskoje gosudarstvo i jego rol' v istorii Vostočnoj Jevropy i Kavkaza*, "Nauka," Moscow 1990, p. 30. In fact, in the end of the short Part II, which actually is the preface to the work of Sebēos proper (Part III), [Pseudo-]Sebēos promises to relate the address of Irakl (Heraclius) to the Northern Countries, to the T'et'al (*Hephthalite) king, the sending of innumerable hordes of armies, the Greek campaign in Atrpatakan, pillage and their return through Paytakaran, the arrival of the Persian troops from the East to combat them, the war in Alvania, the Emperor's return to Naxčavan, the Ačeš battle, the Emperor's return to his realm, the second compaign against Husrau, the Nineveh battle, the attack upon Ctesiphon, etc. In reality, Ch. 26 of Sebēos proper does

6.4 Another Georgian source of a later date (the extant edition is from the 12th century), the *Vita* of David and Constantine, which tells the tragic story of two Georgian princes killed in 741 by Marwān ibn Muḥammad,[120] remarks while referring to the same earlier events: "but the servant of God, the Greek king Heraclius…was commanded by God to *go to the land of K'omans who are Q'ivčaq's, and he gave his daughter to the king of the Q'ivčaq's as a wife*,[121] and then took him with his entire army to strengthen him" (*ševida kue q'anasa K'omantasa romel arian Q'ivčaq'ni, da misca asuli twisi colad mepesa Q'ivčaq'tasa*). This is a striking illustration of the way in which our texts anachronistically updated their ethno-geographical data. This text indicates that Khazars were no longer known to—or relevant for—the 12th century redactor,[122]

---

not contain much of the accounts promised by the later redactor of the Preface (neither the siege of Tbilisi, nor the *entente* with the Northern barbarians), who apparently drew upon the tradition current in the 9th century.

[120] *C'amebai da ğuac'li c'midata da didebulta moc'ameta Davit da K'ost'ant'inesi* (The Martyrdom and Heroism of the Holy and Glorious Martyrs, David and Constantine), in *Čveni Saunǰe* I, ed. K. Kekelidze (K'. K'ek'elije), Tbilisi 1960, pp. 435–46; Bíró, "Georgian Sources on the Caucasian Campaign of Heracleios," p. 129.

[121] Italics mine. This is the only source (edited in the extant form more that half a millennium after the events described!) to make mention of the marriage of the Emperor's daughter to the Qağan (cf. M. van Esbroeck, "Une chronique de Maurice a Héraclius dans une récit des sièges de Constantinople," *Bedi Kartlisa* 34 (1976), pp. 74–96, p. 93 at the bottom). However, we do know from the Byzantine historian, Nicephorus, that the Emperor *promised* to give his only daughter Eudocia, *Augusta Rômaiôn*, to the lord of the Turks (*tourkôn kurios*), but the marriage was not consumated as the Khazar ruler was slain in 629. See *Nicephorus Patriarcha, Historía síntomos. Breviarium reerum post Mauricium gestarum*, ed. I. Bekker, Bonae, 1837, 15.20.16.20, p. 78; *Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople. Short History, Text, Translation and Commentary by Cyril Mango*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C. 1990, pp. 56–57, 66–67; cmp. K. Czeglédy, "Herakleios török szövetségesei," *Magyar Nyelv* XLIX (1953), 319–323, p. 323. On this episode, cf. now C. Zuckerman, "La petite *augusta* et le Turc. Epiphania-Eudocie sur les monnaies d'Héraclius," *Revue Numismatique* 150 (1995), pp. 113–126; compare the critical reviews published in *Revue Numismatique* 152 (1997), pp. 453–472, and Zuckerman's answer on pp. 473–478. Nicephorus (758–829; Partiarch in 806–815) belonged to the same generation as Theophanes. For the period between 609–799, his chronicle is very poor. Later, Nicephorus mentioned that Heracleus suggested marrying the same Eudocia to the Arab general Ambros (*'Amr[u]), if only the Muslim would be baptized.

[122] However, there is an interesting example of a much later interest in the Khazars. The stories of J̌imšer son of the king of the Khazars and of J̌imšer's son were interpolated in the 18th century into the Georgian epic *Amiran-Darejaniani* (cf. Rayfield, *The Literature of Georgia*, p. 67). This epic work is attributed to Mose Xoneli, and was versified in the 17th century by the brothers Sulxan and Begtabeg Taniašvili. The earliest MS is from the 17th century; for an English translation: R.H. Stevenson, *Amiran-Darejaniani*, Oxford 1958. One should note that no reference to the Khazars can be found in Šota Rustaveli's masterpiece of the Georgian epic, *Vepxist'q'aosani* (*The Knight in the Panther Skin*; English translations [by slightly different names] by M.S. Wardrop, London 1912

who knew the lords of the Northern steppes in his own days as Kumans, glossed Qıpčāqs. This would illustrate again what we already know: in many cases, the previously revised texts substituted Khazars for more ancient nomads.[123]

6.5 According to KC, trapped between the Byzantines and the Persians, the *eristavta mtavari* ("the leader of the heads of the people") of Kartli, Stepanoz son of Guaram[124] (Iranian **Wahrām*), did not dare to adopt a royal title. It seems that his religious politics were non-Orthodox and he presumably returned to Monophysite Christianity after the Sasanian government issued a decree ordering all Christians to embrace it, for it is said that he was impious and did not increase the religion[125] and did not serve God. In Georgia, which only a few years before that had gone through a painful split with the mother-Church of Armenia and joined the previously hated Chalcedonians, the situation was extremely sensitive.[126] In the war between Byzantium and Persia, presumably Monophysite Stepanoz supported the Persians against the Byzantines supported by his Chalcedonian compatriots, guided by the *erismtavar* ("ethnarch") Adarnase, Stepanoz' relative from the "older" line of the Chosroid House. According to the 11th century Chronicle of J̌uanšer (KC pp. 223 ff.), in 627 C.E. Heraclius brought *Turks* from the West, gathered

---

and 1966; K. Vivian, London 1977; R.H. Stevenson, Albany NY 1977; French: S. Tsouladzé, Paris 1966; etc.).

[123] See M. Bíró, "The 'Kipchaks' in the Georgian Martyrdom of David and Constantine," *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestinensis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae (sectio linguistica* IV), Budapest 1973, 161–8; Bíró, "Georgian Sources on the Caucasian Campaign of Heracleios," p. 129–130; Golden, "Cumanica I: The Qipčaqs in Georgia," pp. 52–3. Compare now M.P. Margulija [Margulia] & V.P. Šušarin, *Polovcy, Gruzija, Rus' i Vengrija v XII–XIII vekax*, Moscow 1998 (esp. Ch. 4). The great Israeli scholar of Khazaria, A. Polak, referred to Khazars in KC in the 12th / 13th centuries (under George III, 1156–1184, and his daughter Thamar, 1184–1212) as to firm evidence (see Av. N. Polaq [Review of A. Aštōr, *Qōrōt̲h hayyəhūdīm biSəp̲hārad̲h hamuslemīt̲h, I: Mikkibbūš Sep̲hārad̲h ʿad̲h šeqīʿat̲h haḥālīp̲hūt̲h*, 711–1002), Qiryat̲h-Sēp̲her, Jerusalem 1960], *Tarbīṣ* 30.2 (1961), pp. 84–95, p. 89). However, these "Khazars" are simply Qıpčaqs, cf. also D. Shapira, "Iranian Sources…," n. 53 (in this volume).

[124] Gourgen the Curopalates, ruled *ca.* 588–602, the first holder of the Iberian Principate, founder of the Guaramid line of the Chosroid House, see Toumanoff, "Iberia on the Eve of Bagratid Rule," p. 199 ff. and the table on p. 259.

[125] A semantic calque from Persian, found also in Syriac; for an example of the Syriac usage, cf. J.P. Asmussen, "Christians in Iran," *The Cambridge History of Iran 3(2), The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, ed. by Ehsan Yarshater, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, London etc. 1983, pp. 924–948, p. 944.

[126] Cf. Bíró, "Georgian Sources on the Caucasian Campaign of Heracleios," p. 127.

innumerable troops and attacked Persia, coming first to Kartli. Stepanoz, loyal to his Persian masters, fortified the citadel of Tbilisi (known *later* as Qal'a)[127] and, though the Byzantines laid siege to Tbilisi, daily made sorties out of the city gates and fought the Greeks, until he was killed, and the Emperor seized Tbilisi.

But in the citadel there remained a few who did not surrender. Obviously, most, if not all of them, were members of the Persian garrison, although the text does not state this explicitly. The commander of the citadel insulted the king, that is, the Emperor, calling down from the citadel: "You have the beard of a billy-goat, and you have the neck of a he-goat" (in the 12th century Armenian translation of the Georgian, which is the oldest attestation of the text:[128] "Up and depart, you smelly goat"), accusing him thus of pederasty (cf. further). The king commanded:[129] "Although this man scornfully calls me a he-goat, yet his remark is not false." He took the book of Daniel, and found it written thus: "The goat of the West will come forth, and he will destroy the horns of the ram of the East" (a paraphrase of Daniel 8.3–10).[130] Then the king rejoiced, and was convinced that everything would succeed for him against the Persians [KC, p. 224]. The king [Emperor] then summoned the son of Bakur, king of the Georgians, a descendant of Dači the son of Vaxtang, who was *eristavi* of Kaxeti, named Adarnase,[131] and gave him Tbilisi and the principality of Kartli. He left with him an *eristavi* who was called

---

[127] This Arabic name for Tbilisi's citadel is anachronistic here, as it was given to the citadel only after Tbilisi became a Muslim city in the mid-7th century (and remained so for the following centuries). For another example of terms used anachronistically, cf. Ja.A. Borovskij, "Vizantijskije, staroslavjanskije i starogruzinskije istočniki o poxode rusov v VII v. na Car'grad," *Drevnosti Slavjan i Rusi*, ed. B.A. Timoščuk, "Nauka," Moscow, pp. 114–119.

[128] *KC* in Old Armenian was published in Tbilisi in 1953 by I. Abuladze [Abulaje], *Kartli Cxovrebis Jveli Somxuri Targmani*. See also an important study by S.S. K'ak'abadze, "Ustanovlenije kritičeskogo teksta načal'noj časti 'Kartlis Cxovreba'," *Palestinskij Sbornik* 15 (78), 1966, pp. 172–180; also R.W. Thomson, "The Armenian Version of the Georgian Chronicles," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 5 (1990–1991), pp. 81–90. For an English translation of the Armenian and Georgian texts, see Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, p. 233 (Georgian), p. 234 (Armenian).

[129] The verb used is a semantic calque of Persian *farmūdan*, used for both "to command" and "to speak."

[130] K. Czeglédy, "Herakleios török szövetségesei," *Magyar Nyelv* XLIX (1953), pp. 319–323, p. 322, remarked that the Byzantine Emperors tended to consider themselves as the "He-goats of the West" (see also Bíró, "Georgian Sources on the Caucasian Campaign of Heracleios," p. 129).

[131] Ruled 627–642, see Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, p. 380 (according to the table on p. 259 in Toumanoff, "Iberia on the Eve of Bagratid Rule," 627–630/4).

Ĵibğo,[132] and ordered him to attack Qal'a. The king himself set off to wage war on the Persians. Within a few days they captured Qal'a and seized its commander. The *eristavi* (*i.e.*, as it seems, Ĵibğa) first filled his mouth with drachmas, since the Emperor had been pleased with his words. But afterwards he had him flayed, and had it (the skin) sent back to the Emperor at Gardaban (in Albania). For his presumption against the king he was slain. By such a death Stepanoz and his adherents perished. God destroyed the *mtavari* Stepanoz, because he did not live with trust in God. He was an enemy to the faithful, and loved the impious" (*i.e.*, the Persians or anti-Chalcedonites).[133]

6.6 Here the sequence is as follows: Heraclius allied himself with the Turks / Khazars, assembled an army and went to Georgia. There is not a single word about Turkic, or Khazar, troops arriving in Georgia; the role of the Persians is downplayed; it was Stepanoz who organized the defence, fought vigorously, but was killed in battle. After his death, Tbilisi was captured, but some people, obviously, Persians, kept defending the citadel (at this point we can assume that this continuation of the siege could have been seen as ***two*** different sieges, as it became, seemingly, in the case of the Albanian Chronicle, cf. further). Their commander mocked the appearance of Heraclius, his beard and his neck. The Emperor read from Daniel, appointed a new ruler of Kartli from the local dynasty and a relative of Stepanoz who had been killed, and departed to fight the main forces of the Persians. He left with the new Georgian ruler a Ĵibğa, who was described as merely an *eristavi*, "prince,"[134] and who had been

[132] See Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, p. 187 ff. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, p. 146, identified him with Mo-ho-šad, the younger brother of T'ong Yabğu (who became Qağan not later than 618 C.E., see Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, p. 188); however, Pritsak identified the Turkic ally of Hieraclius with "T'ong Še-hu (*yabğu*), ruler from 618 to 630, [who] aqcuired the high title of *šad* in 627. His son established the new realm in the 630s and 640s" (O. Pritsak, "The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism," *Harvard Ukranian Studies* 2.3 (1978), pp. 261–281, p. 261). Cf. also A. Bombaci, "Qui était *Jebu Xak'an*?," *Turcica* 2 (1970), pp. 7–24.

[133] KC, pp. 225–6; the translation adopted from Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, p. 235.

[134] There is nothing in the text that could lead one to realize that this was the mighty ally of the Emperor, and not merely one of his generals (in the Armenian translation of KC he is called *zoragloyx*, "the head of the army"). The whole setting of the version in KC is such that it attributes the sack of the Georgian capital to the Orthodox Emperor, not to a Northern barbarian.

successful in capturing the citadel. This J̌ibğa acts, avenging the Emperor's insult: he first fills the mouth of the captured officer with drachmas, then has him flayed. Then it is concluded that "by such a death perished Stepanoz and his adherents," though we had believed Stepanoz had already died a warrior's death.

6.7 The version of MK 25–26 is an abridgement, albeit a coherent one, of a source common with KC:

da misa šemdgomad eristvobda Stepanoz, jē misi, jmai Demetresi, da ikmoda ek'lesiasa ǰuarisasa.

Mašin čamovlo Herak'le mepeman Berjentaman. Da uqmo cixis tavman k'alayt Tpilisisayt mepesa Herakles vac-bot'obit, xolo man perqi daap'qra da Daniel moiğo da moijia saxe ese: "movides vaci igi mzis dasavalisay da šemusrnes rkani verjisa mis mzis ağmosavalisani,"[135] *da mepeman hrkua: "esret iq'os sit'q'uay, me migago misagebeli šeni." Da daut'eva J̌ibğo eristavi brjolad da tvit c'arvida Bağdads brjolad Xuasro mepisa. Xolo aman J̌ibğo mcireta dğeta šemdgomad k'alay gamoiğo da cixistavi igi šeip'q'ra dap'iri drahk'anita ağuvso. Da merme mrtels t'q'avi gahqada da mepesa uk'uana mis c'ia Gardbans Varaz-Grigolissa šina.*

"Then after him (Guaram) *eristavi* was his son Stepanoz, brother of Demetre, and he was building the Church of the Cross. Then Heraclius, King of the Greeks, swept (Kartli). Then the commander of the citadel Qalʿa of Tbilisi called King Heraclius "a goat." Then he (the King) put forth his leg firmly, took the book of Daniel, and found it written thus: "The goat of the West will come forth, and he will destroy the horns of the ram of the East," and the king said: "Let it be so, I will reward you." He left J̌ibğo the *eristavi* to wage war, and went to Baghdad to fight King Husraw. And after a few days J̌ibğo seized Qalʿa, caught the commander of the citadel and filled his mouth with drachmas. Then he flayed him while still alive, and it (his skin) was sent back to the king at Gardaban, to Varaz-Grigol's."

In this account one could not know who J̌ibğo is, who acts as one of the generals of Heraclius. The commander of the citadel calls the Byzantine

[135] In the text of KC the quotation appears in a slightly different form: "*gamovides vaci dasavlisa da šemusrnes rkani verjisa ağmosavlisani*."

king just "a goat," which is more similar to the old Armenian testimony of the Georgian text of KC. Ctesiphon is called Baghdad (*Bağdad*), not Babylon; there is no bad word to say about Stepanoz, and his death is not mentioned at any stage of the story: it is *the commander of the citadel* who was executed. But let us see how the account continues.

After that, the text tells about Heraclius' victories in Persia. The text adds that the Emperor returned to Tbilisi, where he assembled all the Christians in the churches and forcibly converted Magi and fire-worshippers (*moğuni da cecxlisa msaxurni*) and slayed those refusing to be baptized, purified / sanctified the religion of Christ (*xolo Herak'le gancmida šǰuli Krist'esi*), and streams of blood washed the churches (*da ek'lesiata šina mdinareni sisxlisani diodes*). Surprisingly, the text adds: "and the *eristavi* was the same Stepanoz the Great, and the Catholicos was Bartholomew for the second time" (*da eristavobda igive didi Stepanoz da k'atalik'ozi iq'o Bartlome meored*).

It seems that Heraclius carried out a massacre not only of Zoroastrians[136] (and, perhaps, other non-Christians—note that the Jews are nowhere mentioned!—perhaps because there were no Jews in the town?), but also of Christians: all the Christians were rounded up into the churches which were washed with rivers of blood. I would suggest that this is an indication that many Georgians in Tbilisi at that point were not Orthodox, but rather Monophysite (or Nestorian?). And after all that, Stepanoz became the ruler, and the Catholicos Bartholomew returned to his office for the second time![137]

The reference to the skin of the commander of the citadel sent to the king at Gardaban, to the place of Varaz-Grigol, is interesting. Varaz-Grigol was the Christian ruler of Caucasian Albania who collaborated with the Persians, just as Stepanoz had, but unlike him, Varaz-Grigol crossed the lines. When Heraclius stayed at Gardaban, he forced

[136] On Heraclius' agenda of converting the Persians, see C. Mango, "Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide," *Travaux et Mémoires (Collège de France, Centre des recherches d'histoire et de civilisation byzantines)*, 9, Paris 1985, pp. 91–118 (pp. 105–118: "Heraclius, Šahravaraz et la Vraix Croix"). On the anti-Chalcedonite tendencies of certain Georgian and Armenian sources and their reflection in the texts' attitude to Heraclius, see *Antiox Stratig. Plenenije Ierusalima persami v 614 g.*, gruzinskij tekst issledoval, perevel, izdal i arabskoje izvlečenie priložil N. Marr, (St. Peterburg 1909), p. 60.

[137] One might suggest that the pro-Iranian and non-Orthodox Stepanoz I (590–627) was confused with Adarnase's son, Stepanoz II (642–650), the Kartli ruler who capitulated in 645 to the Arabs, securing thus his country.

Varaz-Grigol to accept the King's (Monothelite) Orthodoxy.[138] What was the point of sending the skin of the Persian officer to (the place of) Varaz-Grigol? Was it not rather the skin of Stepanoz which was sent (as the version of KC would suggest), in order to intimidate the shaky Christian ally?

6.8 This suggestion is supported by another text to which we shall turn to presently. Another important source in Armenian is the *History of the Caucasian Albanians* by Movsēs Dasxuranc'i (or Kałankatuac'i, or Kałankaytuac'i) of Uti.[139] Caucasian Albania (or Ałuank') corresponds roughly to the nortern parts of the present Republic of Azerbaydjan, where a small Udi (or Udin, from *Uti) minority still survives, which belongs to the Armenian Church and speaks a "Daghestani" language. Their Udi language is believed to be derived from one of the dialects of the now extinct Caucasian Albanian / Ałuanian.[140]

Movsēs' work was composed between the first years of the eighth century and 958 C.E.[141] and finally edited at the turn of the 11th–12th centuries.[142] The chronology of this valuable Albano-Armenian source

---

[138] After the Byzantine victories, Heraclius proceded baptizing anew the local Monophysite Christians into his Chalcedonian Orthodoxy; according to Sambat, the son of David, Varaz-Gregel was baptized by the Emperor (who took the old Hellene title of Basileus) into the Greek Christianity, and it was only later that the Albanian Catholicos Viroy re-baptized him back into the Armenian brand (M.I. Artamonov, *Očerki drevnejšej istorii xazar*, Leningrad 1936, pp. 59–60; C.J.F. Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranc'i*, London Oriental Series. Volume 8, London 1961, p. 109; Bíró, "Georgian Sources on the Caucasian Campaign of Heracleios," pp. 131–2). My understanding of the episode is in agreement with that of C. Toumanoff, in his review of Dowsett (*BSOAS* 25 (1962), pp. 364–366. C. Zuckerman (see K. Cukerman, "Xazary i Vizantija: pervyje kontakty," *Materialy po Arxeologii, Istorii i Étnografii Tavrii*, VIII (Simferopol' 2001), pp. 312–333 (p. 319), and in this volume) treats the episode with Varaz-Grigol's baptism very differently.

[139] Text: *Movsēsi Kałankatuac'woy Patmut'iwn Ałuanic' ašxarhi*, ed. M. Emin, Moscow 1860 [reprinted Tiflis 1912] (*non vidi*); *Movsēsi Kałankatuac'woy Patmut'iwn Ałuanic' ašxarhi. K'nnakan bnagirə ev nēražurjunə Varaz Arak'ēliani*, Erevan 1983 / *Movses Kalankatuaci, Istorija strany Aluank. Kritičeskij tekst i predislovije V.D. Arakeljana*, Erevan 1983 (I am very thankful to Prof. J.R. Russell of Harvard for providing me with a copy of this edition, which is quoted here as "Armenian text"). Translations: Movses Kalankatuaci, *Istorja strany Aluank*, Jerevan 1984; Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians* (see the previous note).

[140] Cf. note 19 above.

[141] This is to say, the later date is about the period in which Theophanes and Nicephoros wrote, while the earlier date belongs to the period in which the Khazar state still existed.

[142] Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, p. xx.

is, however, blurred, and the text is arranged badly in the present manuscripts, where the arrangement of the events of the siege of Tbilisi is the most striking example of chronological confusion.[143] In fact, and not dissimilar to the situation with the two Georgian versions of the events under consideration, we have in our Albanian source more than one different account combined mechanically.[144] The order of events given in the Albanian composition is as follows:

Heraclius attacked the Persians in Transcaucasia and Atropatena, but the Persians struck back. Heraclius invited the Khazars to attack Albania, they ravaged it and, having seen the abundance of booty captured, "the prince their ruler" (*išxann tērn nocʻa*) decided to return the next year. Indeed, it occured in the 38th year of Husraw II (628), "the year of his murder," when *J̌ebow Xakʻan*[145] arrived with his *son* and an immense army of Mongoloid-looking hordes of the Northern barbarians ("of that ugly, insolent, broad-faced, eyelashless mob in the shape of women with dishevelled hair," *žantatesil žprheres laynadēm anartewanoun bazmoutʻeann i jew igakan gisarjaks dimeals*).[146] Having destroyed the walls of Čʻołay (Darband?) like a flood, he attacked Partaw and pillaged Albania. Then, he turned to Georgia and besieged "the luxurious, commercial, famous, and great city of Tbilisi" (*zpʻapʻkasoun vačaṙašah hṙčʻakawor mecʻ kʻałakʻn Tpʻłis*).[147] It was at this stage that "the Great Emperor" (Heraclius) joined his ally[148]—our Albanian source describes their meeting in one short phrase ("exchanging royal gifts, they greatly

[143] M.I. Artamonov, *Očerki drevnejšej istorii xazar*, p. 52 ff.; Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, pp. xiv–xv; J. Howard-Johnston, "Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire," *War in History* 6 (1999), pp. 1–44, see pp. 12–13. A different attitude is expressed in A. Akopjan [Hakobyan], *Albania-Aluank v greko-latinskix i drevnearmjanskix istočnikax*, Jerevan 1987, pp. 188–196 (I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. C. Zuckerman for providing me with a copy of this study). Compare now C. Zuckerman's own views in this volume (= Cukerman, "Xazary i Vizantija: pervyje kontakty," *Materialy po Arxeologii, Istorii i Étnografii Tavrii*, VIII (Simferopol' 2001), pp. 312–333).

[144] C. Zuckerman (cf. the previous note) distinguishes between Source A (chapters 9–11), whose author does not pretend to be an eyewitness, and Source B (chapters 12–16). Zuckerman identifies the Source A as the Eulogy of J̌uanšēr, written in 670.

[145] Marquart, *Streifzüge*, p. 498, identified him as Tʻong Che-hou.

[146] Armenian text, p. 135 l. 22–p. 136 l.2; the translation is slightly altered from that given in Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, p. 83.

[147] Armenian text, p. 137 l. 21–2; the translation is slightly altered from that given in Dowsett, The History of the Caucasian Albanians, p. 85.

[148] According to Byzantine sources, Heracleus's allies were Lazes, Abasges, Iberes; al-Masʿūdī mentions Alans, Khazars, Abkhazes, Sarir, Georgians, Armenians, etc.

rejoiced to see each other"). Husraw sent an army under Šahrapłakan for the defence of the besieged city, and when the townfolk saw the approaching Persians, they *then* began to mock the *two* kings. It is not clear from this account whether the Persians were successful in entering the besieged city, which the Byzantine engineers tried in the meantime to destroy by using balistras and other siege machines and attempting to make the River Kura (Georgian *Mt'k'uari*) overflow into the city.

Exhausted, Heraclius tells the Khazars to lift the siege for the time being and return the next year. Seeing that, the besieged citizens began to parody the defeated; they brought a huge pumpkin upon which they drew a caricaturesque image of the "king of the *Huns*," which stressed his Mongoloid features, and placed this offensive image on the city wall; they also thrust a spear into the pumpkin, calling out to the Northern armies: "Behold Caesar, your king, turn and worship him, for he is *Ĵebow Xak'an*" (*ahawasik Kaysr t'agawors jer, owr kays, darjarouk' erkir pagēk' sma, Ĵebow Xak'an ē ays*); they also called "the other king," apparently, Heraclius, "impure / filthy and pederast;"[149] this wording is similar to that of the corresponding slurs found in the Armenian translation of KC and in MK.[150] However, the siege was lifted.

The two kings withdrew; *after that*, according to Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, "in the 36th year of Husraw" (626),[151] Heraclius sent Andrē, one of his nobles, to the viceroy of the king of the North who was second to him in kingship and was called *Jebou Xak'an*,[152] urging him to invade Persia v*ia* the gates of Č'ołay (Darband?) and promising them rich loot; the Northmen sent back to the royal palace an embassy with an *élite* force of a thousand warriors, broke through the passage of Č'ołay, ignored by the Persian garrison, and arrived at the place where Heraclius was based to conclude an agreement with him.[153] It is clear that the same story is

[149] *piłc ew arouazełc*, p. 140.

[150] In several dead and living languages, including Armenian and Georgian, "goat" is synonymous with "pederast;" this Albano-Armenian parallel makes this implicit.

[151] This is where Source B begins, see note 142 above.

[152] *yaĵord ark'ayin Hiwsisoy wor ēr yerkord t'agaworout'ean nora anoun iwr Ĵebou Xak'an*, p. 141.

[153] This should be a reference to the Persian-Avar attack on Constantinople, when Heraclius, who was then in Asia Minor, succeeded in lifting the siege from his capital with the aid provided by the North-Caucasian barbarians, see Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, p. 145 and. n. 11. Compare now also M. van Esbroeck, "Une chronique de Maurice a Héraclius dans une récit des sièges de Constantinople," *Bedi Kartlisa* 34 (1976), pp. 74–96. Note that Sebēos, the Armenian author of the mid-seventh century, mentioned *Čepetux*, or *Čēnastan-Čepetux*, as a general of the *xak'an* of the North, who

repeated here, under different dates (unequivocally dated by the author himself, the events of 628 C.E. precede those of 626 C.E.) and in two different versions.[154]

At the beginning of the 37th year of Husraw (627), the king of the North sent the army he had promised "appointing his nephew (brother's son), whom they call, in honor of his princely rank among them, by the name *Šat*'."[155] This army invaded Albania and Atropatena, Husraw of Persia tried, in vain, to prevent the Khazars from siding with Heraclius, while Heraclius was advancing towards Ctesiphon. Then, the murder of Husraw by his son Kawād and Kawād's enthronement are described. There then follows the accounts about the Catholicosate of Viroy of Albania (released by Kawād from his prison at Ctesiphon) and his return to Albania, and Viroy's assistence to the victims of the Khazar *Šat*'s assault in Albania.[156] It is only *then* that the Khazars' siege of Tbilisi, their capture of the city and the atrocities committed by the Khazar "king" are mentioned: the Khazars "brought the two princes, one the chief-governor of the Persian kingdom, and the other a local native, from the princely family of the Georgian country, as captives before the king, who commanded that their eyes be put out as retribution for having insultingly represented his image as blind. And with dire tortures he strangled them to death, then stripped their skin from their bodies, stretched it, stood it up, filled it with straw and suspended it from the

---

helped an Armenian army, which revolted against the Persian overlords, to pass from Khorasan *via* Darband to assist Heraclius (see Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, p. 147). This perplexing title/name (cf. R. Bedrosian, "China and the Chinese according to 5–13th Century Classical Armenian Sources," *Armenian Review*, Vol. 34 No. 1–133 (1981), pp. 17–24) is probably connected to the Arabic form *sīnǰibū* found in Ṭabarī's History, ed. de Goeje, I, p. 895, cf. J. Markwart, *Wehrōt und Arang, Untersuchungen zur mythischen und geschichtlischen Landeskunde von Ostiran*, hrsg. v. H.H. Schaeder, Leiden 1938, p. 142, cf. Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 35. *Yabgū-Xāqān* is mentioned in an epic context in a Pahlavi text of late provenance, see J. Markwart, *A Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Ērānšahr (Pahlavi Text, Version and Commentary)*, ed. by G.Messina S.I., Pontificio Istitituto Biblico, Roma 1931, § 35 (pp. 17, 85). I would like to note in passing that the B (Čeliši) manuscript of MK contains an anachronistic and corrupt addition: "And then, when King Heraclius came, the Persians fell. And the Persians *built the Khazar Gates and expelled the Khazars*."

[154] Cmp. Artamonov, *Očerki drevnejšej istorii xazar*, pp. 51–54; Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, p. 145 n. 11; p. 162 n. 15.

[155] *zełborordin iwr woroum i patiw išxanoutʻeann iwreancʻ Šatʻ anoun kardayin*, p. 142.

[156] Cf. also Kirakos Ganjakecʻi, *Patmoutʻiwn Hayocʻ*, ed. K. Melikʻ-Ohanǰanjan, Erevan 1961, p. 195.

top of the wall,"[157] and returned home, leaving his forces in the hands of his *son Šatʿ*; then follows a very long description of the woes wrought by the Khazar on Albania in the next years. Later, the Albanian author tells us about Orthodox coercion in Albania launched by Heraclius.[158]

6.9 Again, it is not difficult to see that this last account is a repetition, taken uncritically from one of the sources which were before our compiler, resulting thus in creating the false impression that there were *two* sieges. This Albanian-Armenian version maintains that the defenders of the citadel mocked *two* rulers; there were *two* leaders of the defenders, and both were executed in a similar fashion.

While the Georgian accounts avoided mentioning the humiliating death of their ruler (it is nowhere stated that *Stepanoz* was executed), the Albanian source had no reason to pass over the tragic fate of Stepanoz in silence, rather, omitting any reference to the humiliation forced on the *Albanian* king by Heraclius, Movsēs claims that the stuffed skin of the neighbor and relative of the *Albanian* king was suspended from the top of the wall in Tbilisi, not sent to the *Albanian* king as a warning.

6.10 The Armenian versions (both in the translation of KC and in the Albanian chronicle) have better readings of the insult addressed to

---

[157] Armenian text, p. 153: *acin ew zerkosin išxansn zmi išxann pet kołmnakal tʿagaworoutʿeann Parsicʿ, ew boun bnakčʿacʿ iwrocʿ, i tohmē išxanoutʿeann ašxarhin Vracʿ, zerkosean ounelov; workʿ ibrew acan jerbakalkʿ aṛaǰi tʿagaworin, hramajeacʿ pʿorel začʿs nocʿa pʿoxanak zi koyr nkarecʿin zpatker nora i naxatel nocʿ zna; ew daṛ n čʿarčʿaranokʿ hełjamah arareal znosa wołǰoyn varecʿin zmortʿs nocʿa jandamocʿ nocʿa, ew prkeal hagneal lcʿeal znosa xotov kaxecʿin i veroust zparspēn*; I have adopted, with slight alterations, the translation given in Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, p. 95.

[158] The approaching Byzantine armies posed a mortal threat to the non-Orthodox population of Albania, and, during the tumult of war, many Albanians, Christian and other, fled from their country to the Persian territory, however, *ew kʿahanay womn anoun Zakʿaria ayr sourb wor ēr hamakan Partaway ekełecʿwojn hez ew handart wor ed ganjn iwr i weray nocʿa ew erdmambkʿ ew azgi azgi hnariwkʿ zerjoycʿ zbazoum anjins Kʿristonēicʿ ałotʿiwkʿ iwrovkʿ erašxaworeal znosa, na ew vasn Hrēicʿ ew Hetʿanosacʿowsti ew yetpy govecʿaw gorj nora ew vkayeal yamenecʿownc' kargecʿaw yepiskoposapetowtʿiwn atʿoṛayn Ałownicʿ*, "and a certain priest called Zakaria, a holy man, who was a monk (obedient) at the church of Partaw, a meek and humble fellow, took command; he saved many Christians by oaths and various other means, by his prayers and guarantees, which he also made on behalf of the Jews and pagans; his deeds were afterwards praised by everyone, and he was appointed to a bishopric in the See of Albania" (ed. Arakʿēlian [Arakeljan], Erevan 1983, p. 132 l. 16–19; Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, p. 80). This seems to be the only reference to Jews in Albania (corresponding roughly to the present-day Republic of Azerbaydjan) in the first millennium of the Common Era. On Viroy's ransoming the Armenian, Georgian and Albanian

Heraclius, while in the Georgian sources, especially in the extant text of KC, the defenders mock the Emperor's appearance, not his sexual behavior; this change of context is stressed by putting a Biblical quotation into the mouth of the Orthodox Basileus.[159] According to the Georgian sources, Qal'a, the fortress of Tbilisi, was captured in a few days after Heraclius and his army departed for Babylon / Baghdad, i.e., Ctesiphon, while according to the afore-mentioned last account of the Albanian Chronicle, the capture of the city by the *Šat'* was achieved in two months and this happened a year later (629 C.E.), only after Husraw has been killed in a conspiracy.

6.11 To sum up, it is clear that the Albanian author had more than one source at his disposal, and that his text, whilst garbled, is more complete. As to the Georgian versions of the account about the siege of their capital, they are, however, secondary, and perhaps they are dependent upon the same sources as the Albanian History. At present, it would not be prudent to try to establish a definitive chronology of the events of the last Byzantino-Persian war in Transcaucasia.

6.12 Some Armenian chronicles repeat, in an abbreviated manner, the account of the *History of Albania* concerning the siege of Tbilisi (such as the mid-13th century author Kirakos Ganjakec'i),[160] while others (like John Drasxanakertc'i, following thus Sebēos), whilst referring to Heraclius' *res gesta*, omit the episode of the siege.[161] The account of Kirakos Ganjakec'i, *e.g.* (ch. I, pp. 52–3), is as follows: Heraclius with *xak'an*, the Khazar *king*, invaded Persia. The citizens of Tbilisi mocked the *xak'an* alone, and *shot* at the pumpkin, which was supposed to be a caricature of him. Because this was in the winter season, the Khazar king could not do anything; it seems that the siege was lifted. In the spring the *xak'an* came

prisoners taken by *xazir šat'*, cf. also Kirakos Ganjakec'i, *Patmout'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. K. Melik'-Ohanǰanjan, Erevan 1961, p. 195.

[159] Heraclius was the first emperor (*caesar, imperator, augustus*) to adopt the ancient Hellenic title of Basileus (first documented in 629, see I. Zepos and P. Zepos, *Jus Graeco-romanum*, Vol. I, Athenai 1939, p. 39). On the motives to adopt this title, see I. Shahid, "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26, Wash. 1972, pp. 295–312, and the bibliography given there.

[160] Kirakos Ganjakec'i, *Patmout'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. K. Melik'-Ohanǰanjan, Erevan 1961, p. 52.

[161] In the case of the so-called Pseudo-Šapuh, the section which could deal with this event did not survive.

back and slaughtered the population. We see that this author plays down the role of Heraclius,[162] and makes clear that there were *two* sieges.

7.0 The *History of Albania* contains an interesting episode: in 681, Varaz-Trdat, the Christian prince of Albania, which was suffering badly from both the Arabs and "Huns" (Khazars?), sent bishop Israel to the Northern barbarians to negotiate a peace agreement. After a long journey lasting about six weeks, Israel arrived in "the magnificent town of Varačʻan,"[163] the Hun capital. Israel depicted these "Huns" as tree-worshippers, offering horses to Tʻangri-Xan, "called Aspandiat (*Spandidād / Spandiyār) by the Persians."[164] Israel succeeded in converting their prince Alpʻ Ilutʻuēr and many "Huns," who asked the Armenian Catholicos to give them Israel as their Patriarch, but their request was denied.[165] In fact, this was not the first Christian mission among the Northern nomads. In the first half of the 6th century, an Armenian mission of the Bishop Kardost baptized many North Caucasian Huns and a writing system for their Hunnic speech was developed.[166] However, Drasxanakertcʻi and Asołik[167] report that in the seventh year of Sahak,

---

[162] Similar to the Georgian authors, Kirakos wrote in a more ecumenical environment, while the author of the *History of Albania* was free to attack the Chalcedonians.

[163] Cf. Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, pp. 244–6.

[164] His account contains what was seen as another Iranian element in their religious vocabulary, namely a lightning-god Kʻuar-xan in which the Persian for "sun" was looked for by some scholars, or a Turkic word which supposingly means "the heavenly man," by others, though I personally, judging from the context and following W. Henning's insight, would prefer to see here the Persian word for "charisma" (**xvarr*); it was perhaps a Persian translation of the Turkic term *qut*, used here either by Israel, or by Movsēs. In February 2002, during the Second International Khazar Colloquium in Moscow (Koroliov), Professor M. Qaraqetov suggested a possible connection with the Qaračay-Malkar word for 'lightning, storm' (кюрюў, кърю, къуары, къауар-хан), apparently of substratal origin.

[165] It is of uppermost importance that Movsēs described the Northern barbarians in 681 as "Huns," not "Khazars," though we know now that the Khazar Qaganate was established *ca.* 678–680. On the other hand, an Albanian Catholicos Israel is known to have served in 677–687. One might wonder whether the chronology of Movsēs is wrong and the mission of Israel, the "bishop," took place not in 681, but before 677?

[166] See N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Sirijskie istočniki po istorii narodov SSSR*, Moscow-Leningrad 1941, pp. 166–7. Concerning the date (535 or 537, or 520), cf. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, p. 93 n. 76.

[167] Cf. *Stepanosi Taronecʻwoy Asołkan Patmoutʻiwn tiēzērakan*, ed. S. Malxasean, St. Peterburg 1885 (II, 2; Russian annotated translation by N. Emin, *Vseobščaja istorija Stepanosa Taronskogo Asoxika*, Moscow 1864); cf. Kirakos Ganjakecʻi, ed. K. Melikʻ-Ohanǰanjan, Erevan 1961, p. 64, and R.W. Thomson, "The Historical Compilation of

i.e., 684, there was a Khazar invasion, and the Khazars killed the Armenian prince Gregory. It seems that conversion to Christianity or Islam in this period would damage the Khazar way of life badly, at least in the Northern Caucasus.[168]

8.0 We shall now return to two episodes which should be dated to about a century later than the mission of Bishop Israel.

8.1 The *Martyrdom of Abo of Tbilisi*[169] was written by John Sabanidze [Sabanije] at the request of the Catholicos Samuel (between 785–790 C.E.).[170] Kartli was then a vassal of the Arabs, and Tbilisi was a predominantly Muslim town with an Arab garrison. In 775, the new *Khalīfa*, al-Mahdī (775–785), declared amnesty for all prisoners, and the local Kartlian ruler, Narsē, who had been kept in Baghdad for three years under Abū Djaʿfar (754–775), returned to his country. He was accompanied by a well-educated Arab youth, named, in all probability, Ḥabīb,[171] whose name survived only in a shortened Georgian form, Habo, or Abo. Abo settled in Tbilisi, learned Georgian, and became close to Christianity. Narsē intended to rid his country of its Arab masters, and was planning a revolt. He counted on Khazar support and to keep them safe, sent

---

Vardan Arewelcʻi," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 4 (1989), 125–226. *Non vidi*: Vardan, *Hawakʻumn Patmoutʻean*, Venice 1862.

[168] The question has been asked whether Israel's mission was Jakobite or Monothelite; however, the cruelty of the Khazar invasion failed to produce any Christological distinctions or demonstrate preferences of any sorts, see V.M. Lur'je, "Okolo "Solunskoj legedy." Iz istorii missionerstva v period monofelitskoj unii," *Slavjane i ix sosedi* 6, Moscow 1996, pp. 23–52, pp. 35–36. On the later Khazar attitudes to Monotheism, compare now Shapira, "Judaization of Central Asian Traditions as Reflected in the so-called Jewish-Khazar Correspondence…" *Khazars*, ed. Petrukhin et al., pp. 503–521.

[169] Text: *Jveli kartuli agiograp'iuli literaturis jeglebi* [*Monuments of the Old Georgian Hagiographic Literature*] I, ed. I.V. Abuladze [Abulaje] Tbilisi 1964, I, 46–81; studies and translations: K. Schultze, "Das Martyrium des heiligen Abo von Tiflis," *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur, NF* 13.4 (1905), 4–41; P. Peeters, "Les Khazars dans la Passion de S. Abo de Tiflis," *Analecta Bollandiana* LII.1–2 (1934), pp. 21–56; H. Grégoire, "La vérité sur le Judaïsme des Khazars," *Byzantion* 9, pp. 484–8 (review on the previous item); D.M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*, London 1956, pp. 115–133; M. Bíró, "Abo's Georgian *Vita*," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae*, XXXI (2) 1977, pp. 247–260.

[170] Judging from the fact that the *Passion* does not mention the martyrdom of the Georgian king, Archil, around 787, it was composed quickly after Abo's execution on 6 January 786. See M. Bíró, M., "Marwān ibn Muḥammad's Georgian Campaign," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae*, XXIX (1) 1975, pp. 289–99, p. 295, and Bíró, "Abo's Georgian *Vita*," p. 259.

[171] Certainly, not **Abū*.

his family to relatives, the royal family of Western Georgia, called then Abkhazia (which included Pontos-Lazica).[172] This country was then a vassal of Byzantium, having, at the same time, strong Khazar connections, to the extent that it was sometimes called in Georgian sources the "Lesser Xazareti." The mother of Leon II, king of Abkhazia, was the Khazar Qagan's daughter, and Leon's uncle was another Leo, the Byzantine Emperor called Leo the Khazar (ruled 775–780). Shortly after the events described in Abo's *Vita*, Abkhazia became, whilst backed by Khazaria, formally independent from Byzantium.

Narsē, with 300 men, including Abo, fled to Khazaria with the aim of asking military support from the Qağan against the Arabs. His route was *via* the Gate of Ovseti, Darialani (Dar ī Âlān, Bāb al-Lān). We do not know where he met the King of the North, *i.e.*, the Khazar Qagan, but it was certainly not in the Crimea, as one of the former students of the text has suggested.[173] There were Christians in Khazaria, and it was there that Abo was formally converted. Alhough Narsē enjoyed the Qagan's hospitality, his mission was unsuccessful. The Khazars denied him military support, and Narsē, with Abo and his entourage, moved to Abkhazia. It took him 3 months to arrive there,[174] while he was passing through the territory of pagan nomads. Nevertheless, in 782 Narsē was able to come to terms with the Arabs and was allowed to return to Kartli. It seems that the Arabs were quite sure that there was no chance of Khazar action in support of Kartli.[175] After al-Mahdī died in August 4, 785, Arab attitudes towards Caucasian Christians changed and Abo, an apostate to Islam, was arrested on August 27, and executed on January 6, 786, after he had been allowed to live as a Christian in a Muslim town for some three years. Later, he was canonized.

What is important in the description of Khazar ways of life in the last quarter of the eighth century as found in Abo's *Vita* are the following observations: the "Khazars Sons of Magog" were Mongoloid (*sašinel p'irita*, "with horrible faces"), pagan ("having no religious law"), blood-

---

[172] On local Christian traditions, cf. M. van Esbroeck, "Lazique, Mingrélie, Svanéthie et Aphkhazie du IV^{e} au IX^{e} siècle," *Il Caucaso: cerniera fra cultura del Mediterraneo all Persia (secoli IV–XI). 20–26 aprile 1995*, Settimane di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 43 (Spoletto 1996), pp. 195–221.

[173] Peeters, "Les Khazars dans la Passion de S. Abo de Tiflis," p. 38 ff.; cf. A.A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, Cambridge Mass. 1936, pp. 97–8; Bíró, "Abo's Georgian *Vita*," p. 255.

[174] But cf. Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, pp. 182–3 and n. 55 there.

[175] See Bíró, "Abo's Georgian *Vita*," p. 257.

eating and savage (*kʿac velur*). However, there is no bias in Sabanije's description; they worshipped the Creator (*šemokmedi*), the Turkic God of Heavens *Täŋri*.[176]

According to Muslim authors, first of all, al-Kūfī, in 737, Marwān defeated the Khazars on the *nahr al-Saqāliba* (identified by many scholars with the Volga) and attacked Sarīr, and consequently, the Qagan converted, though for a short period of time, to Islam. Marwān left Transcaucasia, in all probability, in 743;[177] according to Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 170, the religious debate in which a rabbi prevailed over a monk and an Imam took place *circa* 740, and subsequently, it was after that date that the so-called "first stage of the Judaization" of the Khazars, into a "primitive Biblical Mosaism" occurred. However, this first-hand description of the Khazar way of life in 780–1 found in our Georgian source should be noted by those who still believe that the Khazars were already converted to one of the monotheistic religions. "Having no religious law" and "eating blood" hardly characterizes Judaism (or, even "primitive Biblical Mosaism") and Islam.[178]

---

[176] *Jveli kartuli agiograp'iuli literaturis jeglebi*, pp. 58.9–11.

[177] Before invading Khazaria though the Alanian Gate, *i.e.*, *via* Georgia, Marwān ibn Muḥammad laid waste to Kartli. Cf. KC I, pp. 241–4; see also Bíró, "Marwān ibn Muḥammad's Georgian Campaign." Marwān ibn Muḥammad was called in Georgian sources *Murvan Q'ru*, "*the Deaf*," on account of his cruelty; such usage of "deaf" for a tyrannical ruler, *kūr* in Middle Persian, to which the Georgian word is related, has an exact parallel in Pahlavi sources.

[178] The "second stage of the Judaization," the installation of Rabbinical Judaism in Khazaria, occurred, according to Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 170, *circa* 800, for according to Muslim sources, Judaism was adopted by the Khazars during the rule of Hārūn al-Rašīd (786–809). Our Georgian source makes this entire reconstruction impossible and leaves no time-space for these "two stages of the Judaization." According to C. Zuckerman, "On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus' Oleg and Igor," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 53 (1995), pp. 237–270, p. 250, there was only one "stage in Judaization," after the Cyril-Constantine Debate of 861 (and, I would add, after the Danube Bulgars converted to Christianity, leaving thus no alternative to their Khazar foes but Judaism; thus, it is of interest that Druthmar of Aquitaine, a Benedictine monk at Corvey in Westphalia, who wrote his "Expositio in Matthaeum Evangelistam" (see J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus*, Series Latina, Vol. 106 (Paris 1864), col. 1456) *circa* 864, considered it necessary to contrast Khazar Judaism to the Bulgar conversion to Christianity (compare now D. Shapira, "Bulgar- Khazar Rivalry: Notes on Ethnical Historio-Psychology (Judaeo-Turkica VII", *Khazarskij Almanakh* Vol. I (Proceedings of the Third International Khazar Colloquium), Kharkiw 2002, pp. 214–224). The first of these "two stages of the Judaization" may be ascribed to the Jewish-Khazar re-interpretation of the *Täŋri*-cult as a form of primitive Monotheism seen as equal to Judaism, see now Shapira, "Judaization of Central Asian Traditions as Reflected in the so-called Jewish-Khazar Correspondence…" *Khazars*, ed. Petrukhin et al., pp. 503–521.

We do read in our text about Khazar religious tolerance ("there are towns and villages in the Land of the North, whose inhabitants live freely in the faith of Christ"), but we hear nothing about Khazar Jews in our *Vita*. There were Christians in Khazaria, and it was possible for a Muslim to convert to Christianity in Khazaria. There was a bishop at Atil (*ho Astēl*), whose seat was established between 733–746,[179] and Abo probably converted there, while he was staying with his master, Narsē, at "the camp of the seat of the Sons of Magog the Khazars," by which probably the Qagan's horde, Atil, is meant.[180]

8.2 The *Book of Kartli*, a section of KC, begins with a touching story describing an event[181] the precise date of which is a matter of debate.[182] The young king of Kachetia J̌uanšer, the son of the martyr king Arčʻil (d. 786), had four sisters—Goranduxt, Mariam, Mihranduxt and Šušan. The *xakan* king of the Khazars asked for the hand of Šušan as his wife, promising to help the Georgians against the Arabs. J̌uanšer sought the advice of his brother, John the king of Western Georgia, his mother, and the sisters, who answered him that it is better to go to Greece, to his fellow Christians, than to be polluted by heathens. This would imply that in the second half of the eighth century the Qagans were still pagan. However, the *xakan*, some three years later, dispatched to Georgia his general (*spasalar*) Bločʻan, who ravaged the country and took J̌uanšer and Šušan prisoner. Whilst *en route* to Khazaria, Šušan poisoned herself. Bločʻan, accompanied by J̌uanšer, came to the *xakan*, who became angry that Bločʻan had not at least brought Šušan's body, and the general was executed in the manner attested in the milieu of Khazars and their

[179] See Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, pp. 97–8; Bíró, "Abo's Georgian *Vita*," pp. 255–6, with bibliography. On Khazar Christianity as identical with that of the Byzantines, cf. M. van Esbroeck, "Lazique, Mingrélie, Svanéthie et Aphkhazie du IV[e] au IX[e] siècle," *Il Caucaso: cerniera fra cultura del Mediterraneo all Persia (secoli IV–XI). 20–26 aprile 1995*, Settimane di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 43 (Spoletto 1996), pp. 195–221, p. 217.

[180] But cf. Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 182–3.

[181] KC 249.3–250.11. In addition to the English translation in Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, cf. also another English translation, *The Georgian Chronicle Matiane Kartlisa*, Introduction and Notes R. Metreveli, Translation and Indexes by A. Chanturia, Tbilisi 1996, pp. 15 ff.

[182] *Ca.* 789/800 C.E.? Cf. Marquart, *Streifzüge*, p. 416–9; Toumanoff, "Iberia on the Eve of Bagratid Rule," the table on p. 259; C. Toumannoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Georgetown 1963, p. 411 n. 24; Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, p. 251; Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, p. 171 and n. 544.

neighbours, namely, by pulling him between two horses.[183] Seven years later, J̌uanšer was allowed to return to his own country (died after 807 C.E.).[184] From then on, claims the chronicle, the dynasty of the Xosroid kings began to decline in Kartli.[185]

8.3 This small episode, nevertheless, has aroused a considerable volume of studies, for a rather fortuitous reason. The general's name was too similar to the name of the first Jewish *"king"* of Khazaria, Bulan, and some scholars, trying to establish a Khazar chronology, were naturally tempted to compare the name of Bulan with that of the unfortunate general, or even to suggest that they represent the same person.

In fact, the printed text has not Bluč'an, but Gluč'an, with the letters b and g being very similar, and in the manuscript tradition there exist some other forms. There is also another, third, person with a similar name: in 901, a Khazar king K.SÂ b. B.LJÂN attacked Darband, and Minorsky wished to connect this person with the rank or name of our general.[186]

9.0 There are some minor pieces of information from the times of the well known Muslim general Bugha,[187] who was perhaps himself of Khazar origin, as suggested, *i.a.*, by KC, which could be collated with the

---

[183] This custom is also attested in Old Russian chronicles. See also Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, p. 172 and n. 547.

[184] As John died in 786, J̌uanšer was unable to ask his advice after this date; J̌uanšer himself was released by the Khazars seven years after his sister committed suicide, and died in 807. The Khazar *xakan* sent his general to abduct the Georgian princess some three years after the first asked for her hand. Thus, the episode took place between 789 and 800.

[185] In fact, J̌uanšer was the last Chosroid king; the next—and the last—Georgian dynasty is known as "Georgian Bagratids".

[186] V. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband in the 10th–11th centuries*, Cambridge 1958, p. 42 (17.33), p. 106 n. 1; V.F. Minorskij, *Istorija Širvana i Derbenda X–XI vekov*, Moscow 1963, p. 65 (19.32), p. 143 n. 92; cf. Golden, *Khazar Studies*, Vol. I, pp. 171–3, 199. O. Pritsak, "The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism," *Harvard Ukranian Studies* 2.3 (1978), pp. 261–281, pp. 261, 272, identified B.LJÂN, Bluč'an, Bulan; criticism: C. Zuckerman, "On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus' Oleg and Igor," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 53 (1995), 237–270, p. 251 n. 51. For my own explanation of the name of Bulan, see D. Shapira, "Two Names of the First Khazar Jewish Beg," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, Vol. 10 (1998–2000), pp. 231–240.

[187] Apparently, Abū Mūsā Bughā al-Kabīr al-Turkī, who fought in Armīnīya in 851–2 and burned down Tbilisi, and not his younger contemporary Bughā al-Ṣaghīr al-Šarābī, who was active in Âdharbaydjān (see V. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband in the 10th–11th centuries*, Cambridge 1958, Arabic text, p. 3 / English translation

data gathered from Arabic sources. Bugha brought several hundred Khazar and Alan families, which he settled near the Khazar border, and this act was the reason given for his dismissal.[188]

9.1 It would seem that the gradual penetration of Khazar, Hunnic and other Northern groups into Transcaucasia went along with their violent inroads, as is well attested by our Georgian, Armenian and Arabic sources. In many cases, the Northern settlers adopted the local religion, Christian or Muslim, but it is never stated that the settlers were, or became, Jews. In fact, as already stated, there is absolutely no direct reference to Judaism among the Khazars in our Armenian or Georgian sources.

9.2 However, the Armenian and Georgian sources report on the earliest stages of Northern settlement in Transcaucasia *together* with their reports of *Jewish* settlement. There are three possible explanations for this: 1) the sources combine *all* the immigrations together, telling us about all newcomers, whether they are connected or not; b) the sources preserve traditions that (some of) the Northern settlers professed Judaism; c) combining the legends about the settlement of Northerners in Transcaucasia with the legendary accounts about Jewish immigration, the sources, "remembered," so to say, that Judaism was once practiced in the countries from which the Northern settlers came.

---

p. 25; V.F. Minorskij, *Istorija Širvana i Derbenda X–XI vekov*, Moscow 1963, Arabic text, p. 3 / Russian translation p. 46; Dunlop, *Jewish Khazars*, p. 194; I am thankful to Prof. P.B. Golden who called my attention to this point; cf. now P.B. Golden, "Khazar Turkic Gulâms in Caliphal Service: Onomastic Notes," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 12 (2002–2003), pp. 15–27 (pp. 16 ff., 20). As a proper name, Bugha is attested in Old Türkic, see *Drevnetjurkskij Slovar'*, ed. by V.M. Nadeljajev, D.M. Nasilov, É.P. Tenišev, A.M. Ščerbak, Leningrad 1969, p. 120; cf. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, p. 312.

[188] KC 256.18–257.5.

THE STORY OF A EUPHEMISM: THE KHAZARS IN RUSSIAN NATIONALIST LITERATURE*

Victor A. Shnirelman

The history of the Khazars is still obscure; their large state, which encompassed up to the half of Eastern Europe more than a thousand years ago, has completely disappeared leaving no precise legitimate heirs. Historical data on the Khazars are scarce and fragmentary permitting very different interpretations. Over the last few decades all the new data on the Khazars were provided by archaeology, the materials from which made it possible to build up various reconstructions. The latter are often in conflict with each other and with those based on the written sources. As a result, scholars have developed very contradictory views of the Khazars, their political structure and culture, as well as their role in Early Medieval Eastern Europe. Those beliefs nourish by no means the minds of scholars alone. Over the last few decades, they have been profitably used by Russian chauvinists for geopolitical and historiographic constructions aimed at discovering a would be negative Jewish role in the development of many peoples of the world. To put it another way, they manipulate the very scarce and obscure historical and archaeological data as well as doubtful and poorly based hypotheses in order to confirm a priori reasoning and conclusions, which might have far-reaching ethnopolitical consequences today. In this respect one should talk of the anti-Semitic "Khazar myth" being developed by our contemporaries, both scholars and amateur authors, picked up by mass media, and purposefully imposed upon the general public. This paper focuses on various aspects of this multi-faced mythology.

When in the early 1990s I began my studies of contemporary Russian nationalism, I was amazed at the frequency of references to the Khazars in literature produced by the Russian radical politicians. Soon I realized that I was not alone. The American analyst Walter Laqueur was also

* *Acknowledgment: I would like to thank the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism for its generous support of this study. Valuable additional support has been provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.*

surprised to learn that in the very late 1980s Russian nationalists were fixated on the "Khazar episode."[1] For them the Khazar issue seemed to be a crucial one. They treated it as the first historically documented case of the imposition of a foreign yoke on the Slavs, drawing a close analogy with the "foreign yoke" imposed on Russia from 1917 on. They were especially alarmed because the Khazars ruled the southern part of Eastern Europe before the Kievan Rus' state had emerged, i.e. before the Eastern Slavs developed their own state organization. Even worse, the Khazar nobility converted to Judaism. Those historic facts provided an appropriate pretext for arguing that Jewish intrigues and dominance were to be found from the very beginning of Russian history. In this context the term "Khazars" became popular as a euphemism for the so-called "Jewish occupation regime." It is the problem of the power of euphemisms, or the covert language of hatred, that I would like to address.

The Soviet epoch was rich in euphemisms, allegories and equivocal statements, which, on the one hand, provided the interlocutor with necessary information, and on the other hand, permitted him to avoid being persecuted for saying things that could be interpreted as a crime. Euphemisms were extensively used by the dissident authors including the Russian nationalists. During the period of Perestroika, state anti-Semitism disappeared from the USSR. At the same time, abolition of censorship and the new freedom of speech made it possible to express dissident or radical thoughts openly. The anti-Semitic movements, which had developed underground previously, went public and were able to carry on their propaganda legally.[2] At the same time, in the new, liberal environment only a few people and groups dared associate themselves openly with anti-Semitism. First, such an attitude was not approved by the mainstream of Russian society; second, one could be taken to court for an "attempting to stir up national discord and religious intolerance" with respect to the relevant article of the Russian Criminal Code. Even though this article was rarely invoked and few were sentenced for this

[1] Laqueur, Walter. *Black Hundred. The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*. (N.Y.: Harper Collins. 1993), p. 143.

[2] Gitelman, Zvi. "Glasnost', Perestroika and Anti-Semitism," *Foreign Affairs*, 1991, Spring, pp. 141–159; Laqueur. Op. cit.; Korey, William. *Russian Anti-Semitism, Pamyat, and the Demonology of Zionism*. (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995); Gorlizki, Yoram. "The Jews," in G. Smith (ed.). *The nationalities question in the post-Soviet states*. (London: Longman 1996), p. 444.

sort of crime, many contemporary anti-Semites preferred to avoid the risk. Therefore, they tended to present their ideas in the form of euphemisms and allegories. Thus, they discussed "Khazar expansionism" and the "Khazar enslavement" of the Slavs rather than writing openly about the Jewish "infiltration" of the Soviet regime and contemporary Russia. Some anti-Semitic publications went so far as to discuss quite openly the role of "Aesopian" (i.e. allegorical) language in their propaganda.[3]

In this paper I will discuss several different approaches to the Khazar issue developed by the Russian chauvinists based on their evaluation of the socio-political situation in general. I argue that one has to distinguish between Neo-Eurasianists, Russian Orthodox nationalists, Neo-pagans, open racists, and some other factions within contemporary Russian nationalism, all of them sharing anti-Semitic feelings.

Contemporary anti-Semites often feign indignation when criticized. Metropolitan Ioann and his spokesman, for example, have, on a number of occasions, indignantly rejected as "provocation" the accusation of the Metropolitan of anti-Semitism.[4] The anti-Semites employ several ruses to avoid or to reject this sort of accusation. First, as the Russian anti-Semitic discourse demonstrates, contemporary anti-Semites claim that they do not attack the Jews as such but only oppose the most "harmful" ones among them, who strive for world supremacy. Various anti-Semites define this group in different ways. For Vadim Kozhinov, they are the *habers* or *havers* [perhaps connecting the Hebrew word *"haverim"* with "Hebrews." V.Sh.], the heirs of the ancient Pharisees [with this term retaining its anti-Semitic connotations from the Christian New Testament]. For Douglas Reed and his numerous followers, they are the Ashkenazim, who are allegedly descended from the Khazars and have no relation to the true Jews or the Semites in general.[5] For fighters against "international Zionism," like Apollon Kuz'min, the enemy is the "misanthropic" Zionist ideology and its adherents. For writers

[3] For example see *Ruslan i Liudmila. Razvitie i stanovlenie gosudarstvennosti naroda russkogo i narodov SSSR v global'nom istoricheskom protsesse, izlozhennoe v systeme obrazov Pervogo Poeta Rossii A.S. Pushkina*. (Moscow: Kontseptsiia obshchestvennoi bezopasnosti Rossii "Mertvaia voda." 1997), pp. 31–32.

[4] Ioann, Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, *Uberech' Rossiiu*. (St. Petersburg: Petrovskaia Akademiia Nauk i Iskusstv, 1993), pp. 72–73; Dushenov K. "Prorok," *Nash sovremennik*, 1996, N 11, pp. 167–179.

[5] That is why he treats the term "anti-Semitism" as an absurd one. See Reed, Douglas. *Spor o Sione (2500 let evreiskogo voprosa)*. (Iogannesburg, 1986), p. 134.

associated with the *Kolokol* newspaper, it is the "kike-internationalists" whom they sometimes distinguish from the "good" Jews. Viktor Kandyba distinguishes between the "Volga Russes," or "Russo-Jews," who seemed good, and [Jewish] "foreigners" and "traders," who are blamed for all kinds of dishonest deeds. Recently Kandyba came up with a new, euphemistic term of abuse—"Rusalims," which he evidently derived from "Jerusalem."[6]

Over the last three decades or so, the Russian chauvinists and anti-Semites commonly used two terms, the "Khazars" and "ethnic chimera," for both the Jews and their "negative" role in Russian history. The term "ethnic chimera" was coined by the historian Lev Gumilev. Another term, "the Khazars," was common among the Russian émigrés of the first wave and began to spread in Russia since the turn of the 1970s. Evidently, it was brought to the USSR by somebody who, like the artist Ilia Glazunov, was sympathetic toward the Russian nationalists, used to go abroad frequently and established close contacts with some Russian émigrés there. However, the term received a true full life due to Gumilev as well, which leads us to a discussion of the scholars' role in the development of new sorts of racism and anti-Semitism. Indeed, it was Gumilev, who introduced the Khazar myth to the Russian audience, and his works are very popular in contemporary Russia.

While identifying "ethnos," i.e. an ethnic group, with a biological organism, Gumilev maintained that "super-ethnoses" were always inherently connected with specific natural environments of particular regions and that their components ("ethnoses" and "sub-ethnoses") developed within their own ecological niches. Therefore, there was logically no reason for their competition for vital resources and they were, hence, inclined to cooperate rather than to confront each other. By contrast, an alien ethnic group of newcomers that was related to another "super-ethnos" was unable to find an appropriate natural niche in the new area and, instead, began to exploit local inhabitants. For such groups Gumilev coined the term "chimera." He compared chimeras to parasitic animals or to cancers, which throve by consuming the organism that gave them refuge. He argued that chimeras extracted vital resources from the local ethnos by "employing the technique of lying."[7] Usually,

---

[6] See Kandyba, V.M., Zolin P. *Real'naia istoriia Rossii: istoki russkoi dukhovnosti*. (St.-Petersburg: Lan', 1997), pp. 403, 460.

[7] Gumilev, L.N. *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli*. (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1989), pp. 302, 455; idem. *Drevniia Rus' i Velikaia Step'*. (Moscow: Mysl', 1989), pp. 254–255.

Gumilev reasoned, chimeric entities developed at the junction of two "super-ethnoses" and this particular area turned into a zone of disaster. In other words, "the Eurasian concept of ethnocultural regions and chimeric entities in marginal zones proved appropriate for the interpretation of global historical processes. Where two or more super-ethnoses clash with each other, there disaster increases and the logic of creative processes breaks down."[8] To put it other way, a sharing of the same geographical space by two different ethnic groups would invariably have a fatal result.

This approach has an obvious affinity to that of the Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg who claimed already in the 1920s: "If two or more Weltanschauungen, derived from different highest values, occupy a common place in time or space, and each Weltanschauung is meant to be shared by a common group of people, this signifies the existence of an unhealthy palliative which bears within itself the germs of a new collapse." He argued that this caused a decline of the subjugated cultural entities ("cultural souls").[9] Evidently, this is an ideological justification of genocide. Its message was clarified by another admirer of metahistorical constructions, Adolph Hitler, in a following way: "The Jew… was never a nomad, but only and always a parasite in the body of other peoples… Where he appears, the host people dies out after a shorter or longer period…"[10] To complete this set of quotations I would like to refer to one more and the last "think tank," on this occasion to Pavel Globa, a well known advocate of the "Aryan astrology" in contemporary Russia. He teaches us: "Lacking in creative power, Evil is a parasitic germ exploiting more perfect systems, destroying them or otherwise being rejected by them if they contain healthy agents."[11] Isn't this a metaphoric expression of the same hatred?

The Nazi ideology was based on biological racism, which is unpopular nowadays. Yet, it is effectively replaced by cultural racism, which refers to some allegedly innate cultural features like archetypes, cultural codes or modes of behavior. For example, according to Dina Porat, the Islamic fundamentalists depict "the Jew as negative and incorrigible in every respect, demonstrating the same vile character traits that he had

[8] Gumilev. "'Menia nazyvaiut yevraziitsem…'," *Nash sovremennik*, 1991, N 1. p. 25.
[9] Rosenberg, Alfred. *Race and Race History*. (New York, 1970), p. 84.
[10] Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), p. 305.
[11] Globa P.P. *Kosmicheskii passport*. (Minsk, 1992), p. 4.

supposedly displayed in Arabia in the days of the prophet Muhammad."[12] A similar idea was deeply embedded into the Gumilev's theory of the "chimera." This approach is also common for the New Right movements in contemporary Europe, and similar ideas are conquering Russia nowadays being based on popular primordialist views of "ethnos" and nation. In this context, the slogan of multiculturalism is often used to legitimate dominance and discrimination with references to "cultural distinctions" and "ethnic roots." This sort of "multiculturalism" explains modern ethnic conflicts through references to essential "cultural differences" and "archetypes," as if they were inherited from prehistoric or early historic ancestors. It is sad that it is in this form that cultural racism is carving its way into the new Russian school textbooks. The Khazar myth plays an important role in this development.

Gumilev's Neo-Eurasian concept of "ethnic chimera" identified Khazaria with an "aggressive Judaism" and suggested that it be treated as a "zigzag in history" similar to another one, which occurred in Russia after the October revolution.[13] To be sure, Gumilev himself avoided these sorts of analogies. But his thoughtful students understood quite well the secret message of their supervisor, and during the last fifteen years or so they made every effort to bring that to the general public. One of them, a Novgorod writer Dmitri M. Balashov (1927–2000), was certain that wherever the Jews came they immediately tried to seize power and to subjugate the natives as it happened in Khazaria.[14] Others, V. Ermolaev and K. Ivanov, treated Communism as an "anti-system ideology," i.e. a chimera, which emerged as a result of a clash between two super-ethnoses with different potentials—the Jewish one and the Great Russian one.[15]

To put it differently, it is clear to Gumilev's students and followers that a harmful "chimera" comes into being inevitably at the juncture between the "Jewish super-ethnos" and a European or Eurasian one; that this

---

[12] Porat, Dina. "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion: new uses of an old myth," in: R. Wistrich (ed.). *Demonizing the Other: Anti-Semitism, Racism and Xenophobia.* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), p. 330.

[13] For Khazars in the Gumilev's concept see Shnirelman, V. A. "Evraziitsy i evrei," *Vestnik Evreiskogo Universiteta v Moskve*, 1996, N 1 (11), pp. 20–37; idem. "Dvizhenie biosfery milostiiu bozhiei," *Itogi*, March 10, 1998 (N 9), pp. 51–52.

[14] Balashov, D.M. "Eshche raz o Velikoi Rossii," *Den'*, 1992, N 4 (26 January–1 February), p. 5; idem. "Anatomiia antisistemy," *Nash sovremennik*, 1992, N 4. p. 151.

[15] Bondarenko, G., Ermolaev, V., Ivanov, K. "V gostiakh u L'va Gumileva," *Den'*, 1992, N 12 (March 22–28), p. 6.

"chimera" ruined Russia in the 20th century; that her encroachment upon Russia is only a part of the Jewish plot aiming at world supremacy; and finally, that Khazaria was an explicit manifestation and a proof of the reality of this everlasting conspiracy. It is difficult to disregard the close links between this concept and an approach to world history, which was worked out by Soviet critics of "World Zionism" from the late 1960s on.[16]

Another of Gumilev's admirers, the literary critic Vadim V. Kozhinov (1930–2001), suggested that the "Khazar yoke" was much more dangerous for Rus' than the Mongol one since Rus' was still shaping itself at that time. He represented Khazaria as a "permanent, persistent and perfidious" enemy of Rus'. In order to demonstrate that the struggle against the Khazars was a very heavy burden for Rus' he, in contrast to what all other Russian scholars said previously, claimed that Prince Sviatoslav's campaign of 965 against the Khazars was the beginning of a long continuous struggle, and that Khazar dominance was destroyed only by the mid-11th century. Ultimately, all of his reasonings aimed at the unmasking of "militant Khazar Judaism, which tried to enslave Rus'." This was the main goal of Kozhinov's studies, which went far beyond Early Medieval issues that were under discussion.[17]

The message of the Kozhinov's publications becomes clear from his contention, which at first glance has nothing to do with his discussion: "at the time of mass terror in Russia in 1918–1953 there were almost no ethnic Russians among people making crucial decisions. When, just after Stalin's death, the Russians came to power for the first time since 1917, the terror stopped immediately."[18] For Kozhinov himself this sort of digressions is of great importance: it has a "deep relationship with a remote past, which is discussed in my work," he noted. For example, he discovered a term "comrade" (*habr*) among the Jewish Khazars, and believed that this provided him with a basis to "establish a direct link between the 8th and 20th centuries." Moreover, Kozhinov discovered these "comrades" in Judea and identified them with Pharisees; he

[16] For that see Korey, William. Op. cit.

[17] Kozhinov, V.V. "Tvorchestvo Illariona i istoricheskaia realnost ego epokhi," *Voprosy literatury*, 1988, N 12. pp. 130–150; idem. "Nesostoiatelnye ssylki," *Voprosy literatury*, 1989, N 9. pp. 236–242; idem. "Ob epokhe sviatoi Olgi," *Nash sovremennik,* 1991, N 6. pp. 160–163.

[18] Kozhinov, V.V. "Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova ot istokov do smutnogo vremeni (8–17 veka)," *Nash sovremennik*, 1992, N 6. p. 175.

believed that they made a sect, which possessed secret knowledge and despised commoners.[19]

It is noteworthy that Kozhinov himself emphatically protested against the characterization of his "Khazar" constructions as anti-Semitic. No, he claimed, he was not against the Jews as such; but one had to struggle against an "aggressive policy and ideology of International Zionism." The true enemies are the "*habers*," i.e. a "particular social-ideological segment of the Jewish ethnos, which aims at economic, political and ideological domination both over the Jewish people and the rest of the 'peoples of the Earth,'—that was manifested so clearly in history of the Khazar Khanate." And, seemingly, to avoid misunderstanding, Kozhinov accused the Jews of the revolution of 1917 and of the extermination of the best people of Russia.[20] Kozhinov made the blasphemous accusation against Jewish leaders that at the time of the Second World War they rescued the *habers* from the slaughter while deciding who in particular could be sent to the death camps and who should not. He needed all of this in order to "understand perfectly well the historic role of the Khazar Khanate a thousand years before."[21] It is in this way that a forgotten, remote history turned into a very urgent contemporary issue.

Thus, the Neo-Eurasian approach treats Khazaria as a telling case of the chimera. It argues that the chimeras harmed Russia throughout its entire history and, especially in the 20th century due to a destructive Jewish activity as though this was a crucial aspect of the Jewish struggle for world supremacy. A theory of "chimera" fits in perfectly well with the campaign waged by Russian nationalists against "World Zionism." In fact, Gumilev coined a euphemism for "World Zionism"—nowadays the term "chimera" is often used in this particular context. Actually, the theory of "chimera" combines Christian anti-Semitism (the idea of an eternal struggle of Judaism against Christianity) with racism (the idea of some eternal inborn characteristics of the Jews).

---

[19] Kozhinov, V.V. "Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova ot istokov do smutnogo vremeni (8–17 veka)," *Nash sovremennik*, 1992, N 11. pp. 168–169, 176; idem. "Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova ot istokov do smutnogo vremeni (8–17 veka)," *Nash sovremennik*, 1992, N 12. p. 174; idem. *Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova. Sovremennyi vzgliad*. (Moscow: ChARLI, 1997), pp. 217, 229–231, 259–263.

[20] Kozhinov, V.V. "Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova ot istokov do smutnogo vremeni (8–17 veka)," *Nash sovremennik*, 1992, N 12. pp. 172–173; idem. *Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova. Sovremennyi vzgliad*, pp. 256–257, 263.

[21] Idem. *Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova. Sovremennyi vzgliad*, pp. 263–264.

A message of Orthodox anti-Semitism, which was innate in Kozhinov's concept, was picked up in the early 1990s by the late Ioann (1927–1995), then the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga. His view of Russian history is interesting for, first, in contrast to Church tradition, it included the "Khazar episode" as a crucial point in Russian history, and second, it is quite popular among various groups of contemporary Russian nationalists besides the Orthodox ones.

Khazaria was represented as the first victim of "Jewish businessmen, who considered financial power as a first step towards the formation of a long-desired world Jewish state, which the Talmudist-Rabbis taught." The Russian state was fated to be the next victim doomed to be integrated into the Khazar Khanate or to become a new "Judeanized" state of the Khazaria-type. In view of this scary perspective, the Jewish trade in Slavic slaves seemed to be almost an innocent amusement.[22] Like the other builders of the Khazar myth, Ioann was interested in Khazaria not merely for itself but with respect to the world historical process. In the "religious war persistently and continuously waged by Judaism against the Christian Church in the course of two millennia" he saw the "roots of numerous cataclysms which violated Russian life throughout the centuries."[23] The first cataclysm was caused by the Slavic relationship with the Khazar Khanate.

To put it briefly, the Russian Orthodox nationalists associate Khazaria's image with a spiritual enslaving of Rus' and a struggle against Christian statehood. This is treated as an aspect of a general permanent struggle of Judaism against Christianity.

Whereas the Orthodox anti-Semites consider the Khazars the bitter enemies of Christianity, the contemporary Russian Neo-pagans provide them with a reverse image. Indeed, for the Neo-pagans the major world evil is represented by Christianity as though the latter was deliberately created by the Jews in order to enslave all the other peoples. In this context the "Khazar episode" acquires an especially frightening meaning.

The Russian Neo-pagan historiography was elaborated by Valery Emelianov (1929–1999) well-known for his pathological anti-Semitism.

---

[22] Ioann, Mitropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga. "Ocherki istorii Sviatoi Rusi," *Sobesednik pravoslavnykh khristian*, 1993, N 2 (4). pp. 3–4; idem. *Samoderzhavie dukha. Ocherki russkogo samosoznaniia*. St. Petersburg: L.S. Yakovleva, 1994, pp. 17–18.

[23] Ioann, Mitropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga. "Torzhestvo pravoslaviia," *Nash sovremennik*, 1993, N 9, pp. 121–122; idem. *Samoderzhavie dukha*, pp. 253 ff.

For him, the essence of world history was a struggle to the death for world supremacy between Zionists (i.e. the Jews) and Masons, on the one hand, and all the rest of humanity headed by the Aryans, on the other hand, and a perfidious plan of the struggle was worked out by king Solomon himself.[24] Emelianov maintained that Christianity created by the Jews to enslave all the rest of mankind was a powerful tool in the Zionists' hands. An especially important point for our discussion is that Emelianov managed to "discover" Jewish blood in Prince Vladimir, the baptiser of Rus'.[25]

What was the fault of Prince Vladimir, why is he disliked by the Neo-pagans so much? It is not difficult to solve this puzzle. While seeing no serious difference between Judaism and Christianity, Emelianov maintained that baptism of Rus' by Prince Vladimir and the Russian revolution of 1917 were the most disastrous events in all of Russian history. "Indeed, in 988 A.D. International Zion managed to crush the main and actually the last center of Aryan ideology of those days, and to replace it with the reformed, or, more correctly, Esperantized Judaism in the form of the eastern branch of Christianity, i.e. Orthodoxy." Thus, the Russian people were deprived of their Aryan history, ideology and culture. How did it happen that the Russian Prince began the implementation of this "Devil's plan"? For Emelianov this was hardly a surprise: indeed, he believed that the Russian Prince had a Jewish mother, and his grandfather was closely connected with the Khazar Khanate, which occupied and mercilessly exploited genuine Russian territories.[26]

While picking up Emelianov's discovery, another Neo-pagan anti-Semite from St.-Petersburg, Viktor Bezverkhii (1930–2000), maintained that just before the baptism of Rus', the Jews deliberately introduced a cult of primitive idols and bloody sacrifices in order to struggle against this cult later on and to impose a "slavish Christian ideology." It is in this way that they took revenge for the devastation of Khazaria.[27] It is worth mentioning, that since the 1970s an idea of the "Khazar" origin and "undermining activity" of Prince Vladimir was deeply embedded into the Neo-pagan myth and continuously included into respective popular and pseudo-scholarly literature.

---

[24] Emelianov, V.N. *Desionizatsiia*. Parizh: n.p., 1979, p. 21.
[25] *Ibid*., pp. 2, 28.
[26] *Ibid*., pp. 1–2.
[27] Bezverkhii, V.N. "Filosofiia istorii," *Volkhv*, 1993, N 1 (7). pp. 48–49.

For the Neo-pagans, the "Khazar episode," however long ago it took place, sounds like the present day and affects evaluations of contemporary events. An idea that is widespread among the Neo-pagans is that the Jews still cannot forgive Russians for the destruction of the Khazar Khanate.[28] In this way, they explain why the Jews are eager to take revenge. This is illuminated by the following passage from the Bezverkhii's book: "the descendants of the Khazar Kikes—the Ashkenazi-Kikes—through the conclusion of the Belovezhie agreement in 1991, destroyed the Slavic empire, which was built more than 1,000 years ago."[29] Thus, in view of the contemporary anti-Semites there is an unbroken chain, which links the "Khazar episode" with the present day.

In general, the contemporary Russian Neo-pagans continue the anti-religious struggle of the Soviet atheists against Christianity and depict the latter in black colors only. At the same time, they make extensive use of the heritage of Soviet criticisms of "World Zionism" and represent Christianity as a harmful ideology built by perfidious Jews in order to enslave peoples all over the world. In this context, Khazaria's image acquires a new, fantastic meaning as an outpost of aggressive Judaism making every effort to enslave Rus' through the introduction of Christianity. This concept has a racist flavor, relating would be negative Jewish characteristics to their blood. Significantly, the Neo-pagan approach seems attractive to some contemporary Communist groups who, not unreasonably, appreciate its continuity with the former Soviet ideology based on the state anti-Semitism.

Many contemporary anti-Semites appreciate an hypothesis proclaiming the origin of the Eastern European Jews from the Turkic Khazars. It was picked up and developed by an anti-Semite, Douglas Reed, who lived far away from the turmoil in Russia. He tried to demonstrate that the Eastern European Jews with their "destructive instincts" had nothing to do with virtuous and loyal Western Jews. The "Khazar theory" perfectly fitted this idea. But Reed enriched it with a racist approach, which was embedded in his discussion of "the savages from the remote Asiatic hinterland" whose rude "instincts" survived through the ages. He accused the "descendants of the Khazars" of all of the European revolutions of the last 500 years.[30]

---

[28] For example, see Arinushkin, A., Cherkasov, I. *Zov Giperborei*. (Moscow: Gil' Estel', 1998), p. 66.

[29] Bezverkhii. Op. cit., p. 47.

[30] Rid (Reed), Douglas. *Spor o Sione (2500 let yevreiskogo voprosa)*. Iogannesburg, 1986, pp. 92–140.

The first edition of Reed's book came out in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1986. It was published in Russian, hence, intended for a Russian audience. Today, one can say that it fulfilled its mission. It arrived in Russia at an opportune time when a "worthy" audience was already there. For the first time, the book was republished in Russia by a popular Krasnodar magazine "Kuban" by early 1992. By that time, the Soviet Union had finally collapsed, the anti-Russian mood on its fringes had reached a climax, and many ethnic Russians who lived in non-Russian republics or side by side with non-Russian populations were frustrated and anxious while discovering a rapidly growing alienation between themselves and their neighbors. The Kuban was one such region where the Russians lived in close proximity with the Adygeis and other North Caucasian peoples. The relationships between the Russians and non-Russians became rather tense, and the Russian chauvinists tried to throw the blame on the "undermining activity" of "World Zionism." This gave a special flavor to the environment in which Russia became acquainted with Reed's book.

It is worth noting that the "Kuban" magazine published the book in a shortened version, and only those chapters were included, which narrated prejudicially of the allegedly harmful and destructive Jewish activity. It goes without saying that chapter 17 was among them, the latter part of which discussed the Khazar origin of the Eastern European Jews. In order to provide the reader with a completely "clear pattern" the editorial board added a special appendix where extracts of the Torah were compared with New Testament texts. They aimed at making the reader familiar with the "misanthropic" essence of Judaism as if the latter demanded for annihilation of all the peoples in the world.[31]

The "Kuban" edition was appreciated. It was picked up by the well-known Moscow anti-Semite Viktor Korchagin, then a head of the racist Russian Party of Russia, whose "Vitiaz'" Publishing House specialized in the publication of Neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic literature in Moscow. While republishing Reed's book after "Kuban" magazine's edition, Korchagin shortened it even further. He extracted the "Khazar" reasoning of Reed's chapter 17 and organized a special chapter under the title "the Khazars" (which was non-existent in the Reed's book!). To put it differently, Korchagin considered worthy of publication only those parts of

[31] Rid (Reed), Douglas. "Spor o Sione," *Kuban'*, 1991, October–December.

Reed's book which discussed the Khazars, their relations with the Ashkenazi Jews and the Jewish role in "three revolutions"—English, French and Russian. Korchagin's edition especially emphasized that the Russian revolution occurred "under Talmudic-Jewish leadership." Moreover, Korchagin borrowed an idea from an appendix from the "Kuban" magazine: he included there not only extracts from the Torah but also a well-known fabrication, "Adolf Hitler's Will," and extracts from the anti-Semitic pamphlet "International Jewry" by Henry Ford. All of this was meant to scare readers with terrible Jewish plans to exterminate the humanity.[32]

Furthermore, the Russian chauvinist-anti-Semites were fascinated with another book first published in New York in 1982 by a Russian émigré under the pseudonym V. Ushkuinik (1896–1989). Like Reed, he accused the Jews and Masons of subversive revolutionary movements, in particular, of hostile activity against the Russian Empire. He saw the roots of these inclinations in a "racial instinct." After presenting a frightening pattern of "Jewish superabundance" in the USSR, the author queried why that became possible? In searching for an answer he turned to the theory of the "Khazar" origin of Eastern European Jewry. He recalled the Jewish Khazars' encroachments upon ancient Rus' and was in raptures with Prince Sviatoslav's feat. Further on, he reproduced Arthur Koestler's idea that the Judaized Turkic-speaking Khazars who fled from the defeat constituted the foundation for the Eastern European Ashkenazi Jews. While being neophytes, they demonstrated even more zeal toward Judaism than the true Semites. Hence, their unprecedented cruelty toward Gentiles.[33]

While developing this theory, Ushkuinik enriched it with a new "discovery." He argued that these "Khazars" maintained their political organization based on double kingship up to the present day. Addressing an unexacting and ignorant reader, he reversed the true pattern and made the Khaqan, instead of the Beg, the possessor of real power. He needed this argument in order to represent Lazar M. Kaganovich as the "direct heir of Khazaria's khans" under whom Stalin played the role of a dumb Beg. It goes without saying that this makes an excuse for all Stalin's criminal deeds. The "ritual murder accusation" was also used:

---

[32] Rid (Reed), Douglas. *Spor o Sione*. Moscow: Vitiaz', 1993.

[33] Ushkuinik, V. *Pamiatka russkomu cheloveku. Paradoksy istorii*. (Moscow: PT "Kap", 1993), pp. 19–20.

the author made an analogy between the Khazar custom of the ritual murder of their khaqans and the "ritual murder" of the last Russian emperor.[34] The book concluded with that "in the mid-20th century the Eastern Jews managed to restore a system of power, which worked in their native Khazaria around the 10th century, but in the form of Russian quasi-Communism."[35]

Evgenii Evseev (1932–1990), a well-known critic of the "World Zionism," was inspired by Ushkuinik's book to complete his own book "A Satrap" focused on unmasking of Lazar' Kaganovich's criminal activity. Adding to his own merit, the author emphasized that he was the first who paid attention to the "confessional-ethnic character" of this man as though that was a clue to the behavior of the "closest companion of Stalin."[36]

While making "etymological studies," Evseev became interested in Kaganovich's last name and related it to the term "khaqan," which meant a "priest" and was a title of "Khazaria's ruler." Starting with that, Evseev made a trip to the history of Khazaria and maintained that the Ashkenazi were the "descendants of the Khazars rather than the Semites." In the rest of the book Evseev did not return to the Khazar Khanate and its real ruler any further. But the latter's spirit persistently accompanied the reader who saw Kaganovich in no other way but as "a gray cardinal" responsible for but all the criminal deeds of the Stalin's regime against own people.[37] Yet, the author recognized that Stalin more than anybody else was a key character in Soviet leadership.[38]

To put it briefly, while representing the Eastern European Jews as the direct descendants of the Turkic Khazars with all their allegedly persistent criminal characteristics unrelated to any historical changes the theory in question demonstrates its evident biological racism. It is no accident that Evseev referred to Socio-Darwinism, and another amateur Theodor Dichev recalls an eternal struggle between the Aryans and the Jews. At the same time, a concept, which argues that the "Jewish Khazars" maintained specific elements of their original political system

[34] *Ibid*., pp. 21–24.
[35] Idem., p. 26.
[36] Evseev, Ye. S. *Satrap*. Moscow: Moskovitianin, 1993, p. 4.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

(dual power) through centuries, suffers from cultural racism emphasizing an eternal and insurmountable character of the core elements of a cultural system.[39] The Khazar theme turned into a common place of the Russian anti-Semitic literature dealing with Russian history. Thus, it seems important that the contemporary Russian nationalists, firstly, have already constructed an image of a harmful Khazaria, which brought only misfortunes to Russia, secondly, believe in the Khazar ancestry of Eastern European Jewry, and finally, as the anti-Semitic authors maintain, are tracing the roots of the subversive activity of the Masons and Zionists against Russia from the "unwise Khazars."[40] They need a myth of the "Khazar yoke" to make a bridge to another myth of the "Jewish yoke" in the Soviet era.

An image of Khazaria not only infuses the Russian radicals with sad recollections and thoughts, but also directs them to practical actions. For example, a recently established National-Statist Party of Russia (NSPR) manifests its complete readiness for that. A "Narod" newspaper issued by its Tomsk branch maintains that "a power structure of the Neo-Khazar Kaganate has been established in the country… thus, the primary goal is what has been once already done by the prince Sviatoslav, who had destroyed the Kaganate and opened the door to a beneficial development of the Russian state."[41] The prince Sviatoslav became an important symbol of the movement in question, and in the early 2000s they were producing his monument.

This work was first announced by the chauvinist "Pamiat' " newspaper,[42] and the news was immediately picked up by the NSPR's web-site.[43] The readers were informed that 2005 was not only the year of the 60th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War but also of the 1040th anniversary of the prince Sviatoslav's victory over Khazaria. Thus, both events obtained equal value as the crucial ones in the Rus'-Russian

---

[39] For cultural racism see Harrison, Faye V. "The persistent power of 'race' in the cultural and political economy of racism," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 1995, vol. 24; Taguieff, P.-A. "From race to culture: the New Right's view of European identity," *Telos*, winter 1993—spring 1994, no. 98–99.

[40] Stepin, V. *Sushchnost sionizma*. Moscow: Vitiaz, 1993, p. 7; Diakonov, Yu. A. *Piataia kolonna v Rossii*. Moscow: Moskovitianin, 1995, pp. 7, 31. Cf. Kniazev, V.A. *Budushchee mirovogo sionizma*. Moscow: Shikhino, 1997, p. 204.

[41] "Sviatoslav," *Narod* (Tomsk), 2005, no. 3.

[42] "Vspomnit' vse": 1040 let razgroma Khazarskogo kaganata," *Pamiat'*, 2004, No. 9 (156).

[43] http://www.ndpr.ru/news/?nid=395

history. In 2004, several right-wing organizations including the World Foundation of the Slavic Writing and Culture (WFSWC) worked out a program of a celebration of the anniversary of the victory over Khazaria and began the preparations for that. The program included the following reasoning: "Alike Rus' which has been suffering under the Khazar Kaganate's yoke, the contemporary Russia is also suffering under the ruling power which reproduces the main features of the Khazar Kingdom. Yet we have a historically legitimate hope for a rescue. In spring 965 the prince Sviatoslav has raided the Khazar Kaganate and stroke it such a blow that it was unable to recover at that time. It is our sacred duty to celebrate an anniversary of that victory." It is interesting that the author rehabilitated the prince Vladimir and called him a son of the "Slavic Malusha." Following Gumilev, he maintained that "the Khazar chimera which has once emerged as the Khazar Kaganate, survived in history as some chimeric idea." Making a bridge to nowadays, he claimed that a "system of the Neo-Khazar Kaganate" has formed in contemporary Russia."[44]

They intended to honor the pagan warrior Sviatoslav at the day of St. Trinity, on June 19, 2005 by which time the monument had to be erected. The monument was designed by sculptor Viacheslav M. Klykov (1939–2006), a WFSWC's president well known in the patriotic circles who became a member of the organizing committee together with retired generals L.G. Ivashov and I.N. Rodionov linked with the Russian patriotic movement. They were planning to erect the monument in the Belgorod Region. The initial Klykov's idea was to decorate a Khazar warrior's shield with the Star of David. Yet the Federation of the Jewish communities of Russia and the Eurasian Jewish Congress protested against that idea because of its obvious anti-Semitic connotations. Being sensitive to this protest, the Belgorod Region' authorities suggested that the Star of David should be removed from the shield and that the monument would be erected in the village of Kholki rather than in the city of Belgorod.[45] Yet, Klykov did not change his mind, and the sculpture is still staying in his storehouse in Moscow.[46]

---

[44] *Programma Vserossiiskogo i Vseslavianskogo prazdnovaniia 1040–letnego iubileia pobedy blagovernogo kniazia Sviatoslava nad Khazarskim kaganatom*. Moscow: Vek knigi, 2004.

[45] Grigorenko O., Alekseeva O., Kozenko A. "U nerazumnikh khazar iz'iali zvazdu," *Kommersant*, No. 220 (No. 3304) OT 23.11.2005; "V Belgorodskoi oblasti s pamiatnika kniaziu Sviatoslavu iskliuchili shestikonechnuiu zvazdu" (http://radiokurs.ru/content/view/6765/).

[46] "Skul'ptor Klykov schitaet chto Magen David ne imeet otnosheniia k yevreiam" (http://www.jewish.ru/news/cis/2005/11/news994227805.php).

Meanwhile, the victory over Khazaria impressed the Moscow Neo-pagans. One of their allegedly liberal group "Commonwealth of the Natural Faith 'Slavia'" begins it historical era from 964. It is in this way that they turned the victory over Khazaria into a powerful symbol of their faith.[47]

Thus, since the 1970s, a euphemism the "Khazars" became an integral element of the Russian nationalist lexicon and is used to mark the Jews and their "thirst for world power." Why do the Russian anti-Semites like it so much? The summary of all its advantages makes the following pattern based on the "Khazar myth," which is beneficially exploited by the Russian chauvinists.

First, Khazaria collected tribute from the Eastern Slavs, and the Khazar traders made a big profit of the slave-trading. Thus, one can accuse the Khazars of the encroachment upon the Slavic territories and the attempts to enslave the Slavs forever;

second, since the Jews participated actively in the transit trade, which played an important role in the Khazar economy, it is possible to use for the Khazars a common anti-Semitic stereotype, which charges the Jews with cupidity and unlimited thirst for gold;

third, the Khazar political influence upon the formation of the Russian state can be treated as a "harmful dominance" to the extent that the "Khazar instructors" taught the Russian warriors unusual cruelty and sent them to inevitable death;

fourth, the unprecedented Jewish influence within Khazaria can be interpreted as an evident case of their seizure of the state power in an alien state as though that was a materialization of their everlasting goal;

fifth, the Judaism's status of the state religion in Khazaria together with a Rabbi's participation in the famous religious dispute held by Prince Vladimir can be interpreted as a persistent Khazar-Jewish intention to enslave Rus spiritually. Even more so, if one draws Christianity directly of Judaism, it is possible to claim that ultimately the Khazars were a success while imposing Christianity upon Rus' (this is a favorite view of the Russian Neo-pagans);

sixth, while stressing the Khazar origin of Eastern European Jews, it is easy to establish historical continuity between the Early Middle

[47] For that see, Shnirelman, V.A. "Ot 'sovietskogo naroda' k 'organicheskoi obshchnosti': obraz mira russkikh i ukrainskikh neoiazychnikov," *Slavianovedenie*, 2005, no. 6.

Ages and nowadays and to maintain that the "Khazars" brought all their behavioral traits, rooted in the "racial" qualities, into present. Moreover, it is also possible to explain the Jewish "subversive activity" against Russia and the Russians with a reference to the revenge for the devastation of Khazaria by Prince Sviatoslav;

seventh, pointing to the dualism of the Khazar political power and its assumingly unprecedented vitality among Eastern European Jews, one can make an attempt to interpret from this point the specific traits of power structure in the Soviet period and even in post-Soviet Russia;

eighth, Khazaria can be represented as a case of a lethal effect of intermingling of European and Eurasian populations with the Jews resulting in the formation of an unnatural harmful "chimera." Moreover, if one considers that the Jewish Diaspora took deep roots in Europe and North America during the last few centuries, one can easily find a basis for an anti-Western mood as well;

finally, while putting the "Khazar theme" into more inclusive anti-Semitic discourse, one can interpret the Khazar rule over the Slavs as a prognostic of the realization of the Jewish goal to rule all over the world. In this case the Slavs served as an experimental field where different means and methods for that were developed and tested. Thus, the "Khazar episode" becomes of world importance, and the Russian victory over the Khazars makes the Russians a vanguard of the world civilization, its reliable defender from the "World Evil." In brief, the "Khazar episode" fits perfectly well into the Russian messianic idea.

Yet, one might also find arguments to provide the Khazars more positive image. Indeed, the Khazars rescued Eastern Europe of the Arabic invasion and established peace (Pax Khazarica), which permitted the Slavs to colonize new territories; they acquainted them with rich cultural resources of the East; the Slavs learned political culture from the Khazars[48] and began to build towns under the Khazar influence.[49] At the same time, the Prince Sviatoslav's victory over the Khazars paved

[48] Liubavski, M.K. *Lektsii po drevnei russkoi istorii do kontsa 16 veka*. Moscow, 1916, pp. 44–45, 72; Saveliev, Ye. P. *Drevniaia istoriia kazachestva*. Chast' 1, vyp. 3. Novocherkassk, 1915, p. 142.

[49] Priselkov, M.D. *Russkaia istoriia. Uchebnaia kniga dlia 7–8 klassov muzhskikh gimnazii i 7 klassa real'nykh uchilishch*. Moscow: I.D. Sytin, 1917, p. 28.

the way for the disastrous invasion of Rus' by the nomadic Pechenegs.[50] The liberal Russian historians developed all these arguments about a century ago, but they are entirely ignored by the contemporary Russian nationalists.

In fact, the Khazar myth tells us much more about the Russian identity than about the Khazars themselves. Indeed, each of various factions of Russian nationalism prefers its own interpretation of the "Khazar episode"—one that conforms to its attitude towards the Russian identity. The Neo-Eurasians, with their imperial geopolitical view of identity that embraces the entire territory of the former USSR, emphasize the "ethnic chimera" that emerged at the junction of two super-ethnoses and had no roots in the local environment. The eternal cosmic confrontation between Russian Orthodoxy and Judaism is most important for the Russian Orthodox nationalists, who emphasize Orthodox Christianity as the essence of the Russian identity. The Neo-pagans, who associate Russian spirituality with pre-Christian beliefs, attribute all the misfortunes of the Russian people to the Christianization imposed upon them by the "Jewish Khazars." Russian biological racists, who are constructing a bizarre image of the "Russian race," emphasize the harm caused by Eastern European Jews who inherited their national character from the Khazars. The cultural racists share this latter view, insisting on the indissoluble continuity and invariability of ethnic traditions due to their transmission between generations. These different approaches to the Russian identity make it difficult for the Russian nationalists to unite their efforts.

In brief, the euphemism the "Khazars" is strikingly meaningful for the Russian nationalists. It provides the Russian anti-Semitism with an original flavor. Indeed, for well-known historical reasons there are no other national anti-Semitic traditions, which are able to use the "Khazar myth" that much universally and effectively as the Russian anti-Semites do. Yet, whereas they are unable to develop a common positive basis for the Russian identity, they do all the best to build up an image of the Evil Other to encourage the Russian unity. Indeed, the Russian nation has never been finally formed. Making up the dominant majority, the Russians never felt themselves as a highly integrated ethnic group either,

[50] Liubavski. Op. cit., p. 73; Platonov, S.F. *Lektsii po russkoi istorii*. Petrograd: I. Blinov, 1917, pp. 53, 55, 69.

and their ethnic identity was less developed.[51] Hence, the radical intellectuals' and politicians' aspiration to canalize the public anger against ethnic "Others" in order to consolidate the ethnic Russians as the nation. Indeed, as we are taught by certain British scholars, the "racist thinkers sought to use ideas about race and nation to make sense of the changes and uncertainties brought about by socio-economic change, and to provide a basis for political mobilization and action."[52] An image of the enemy proves to be very effective in order to consolidate the nation.

[51] Rees, E.A. "Stalin and Russian nationalism," in: G. Hosking, R. Service (eds.). *Russian nationalism: past and present*, pp. 77–106. London: MacMillan, 1998.

[52] Solomos, John and Back, Les. *Racism and society*. London: MacMillan, 1996, pp. 100, 210–211.

THE KHAZARS AND THE WORLD OF ISLAM

David J. Wasserstein

A good deal of what we know of the Khazars comes from Islamic sources, or sources in the Islamic world. A large proportion of it concerns Khazar relations with Islam, or Islamic impressions and knowledge of the Khazars (We have of course nothing from the Khazar side of the relationship). Although this is not true of the material for the pre-Islamic period, partly because of the nature of Islamic historiographical interests and methods, it is true of the material both for the period up to the middle of the tenth century and the disappearance of the Khazar state, and for the period thereafter. It might be thought, in consequence of this fact, that for Islam in its first three centuries the Khazars and their state were of some significance, that Muslim relations with them mattered to the rulers of the caliphal empire, and that knowledge of them was of interest and value to those who were concerned with ethnography, geography, and international relations among the intellectual and other elites of Islam. If we consider the matter not from the Khazar viewpoint but from that of Islam, and the Islamist, then the opposite seems in fact to be the case. Our information is spotty and slight; Muslims do not seem to have regarded the Khazars as much more than a people living on their borders with whom they needed to exercise care, perhaps more than with others; and although some material will certainly have been lost, all the signs are that there never was much knowledge about the Khazars available to Muslims.

This begs a question: why was it thus? Should not the Khazars have aroused greater interest in the world of Islam? They were of great importance in areas with which the Islamic world had had contact for centuries, from the very first generation of Islam's existence, and relations with them did matter. Their own potential for contact with the hostile power of Byzantium should have made them an object of more than merely intellectual interest and curiosity to people within the world of Islam. Or is perhaps the assessment itself in error, so that in fact our evidence is slight because so very much has been lost in the course of history? Much certainly has been lost, here as in every other area that we might look at, not only on the Khazar side but also on the Islamic, and

we can but imagine what the lost material might have told us. If we had more evidence, particularly from the Khazar side of the relationship, then things would look very different. Rather than simply warming over and serving up the material that we do have, which is for the most part well known to all those who study the Khazars, it seems to me that it may be worth trying to offer a preliminary answer to these questions.[1] I propose to look at three principal issues: one, Islam's experience of the Khazars; two, the Islamic context of the Jewish aspect of Khazar history; and thirdly, the meaning that we should attach to the materials that we find on the Khazars in Islamic sources.

1. *Islam's experience of the Khazars*

In 641 or so, when the emergence of the Islamic empire and the earliest Arab incursions into the Caucasus first brought Muslims into contact with the Khazars, the Khazar state had already been in existence for a long time, and it must have looked as though it was a permanent fixture on the political map of the area of the Caucasus. However, the changes brought about in the political geography of the Caucasus and the trans-Caucasian regions by the growth of the Islamic empire proved critical, and fatal, for the Khazar state and society. In part the decline of the Khazars in the tenth century is to be seen as deriving simply from the character of the Khazar state, as essentially a nomadic empire lying on the edges of large sedentary empires, with a hinterland which was always pressing on it, in other words as internal to itself and not fundamentally a product of the world around it. But in part also we should see the rearrangement of the frontier regions of the two neighbouring empires as responsible. It was precisely here, in the area adjoining the Caucasus, that the changes brought by Islam mattered very greatly, not so much to the Islamic world as to the Khazars themselves.

[1] For the material the two essential works are D.M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1954 (repr. New York, Schocken, 1967); and Peter B. Golden, *Khazar Studies, An historico-philological inquiry into the origins of the Khazars*, 2 vols. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó (Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica, XXV parts 1 and 2), 1980.

Before the rise of Islam, Byzantines and Persians together, in uneasy and often unwilling and sometimes even unconscious co-operation, had policed their common frontier with the mountains and, beyond these, the steppe, building fortifications and political arrangements designed to keep the nomads at bay and to leave the ground free for the two empires to confront each other in relatively full understanding of each other's motives and methods. The Byzantines seem to have been better than the Persians at building and nurturing their relationship with the Khazars. The Islamic conquests moved the borders and changed the rules of the traditional game: the Byzantines withdrew westwards, while the Persian empire was destroyed, and was replaced by the new state of the Muslims.

Unlike their predecessors, the Muslims were expansionists interested in conquest. As early as 641 we find Muslim troops at Derbend and attempting to penetrate further still. This was not the same as the lengthy mopping-up operations which characterised the first couple of decades of Islamic rule in the former Persian empire. Even if they had but limited success, mingled with some failure, in these attempts to conquer new territory in the Caucasus, all of this was a pointer to what was to follow. And while the real, if varying, threat which Khazars and Muslims constituted to each other remained alive for a full century thereafter, we also note one feature of that century which shows the direction of the historical wind. The Khazars removed their capital northwards, to get out of the way of the dangers posed by Arab raiding; and Arabs made attempts to advance in the same direction.

In 713 Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik, a son of the great Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik and himself a general of great distinction, captured Derbend, an achievement which he repeated the following year, when he also destroyed the town. But in the following two decades the pendulum swung backwards and forwards, and in 730 the Khazars were able to defeat and kill another Muslim general, Jarrah b. ʿAbd Allah al-Hakami. Now the Umayyad caliphate itself began to suffer from the major internal difficulties which destroyed it two decades later, but it was still able to send Marwan b. Muhammad, who was to become the last Umayyad caliph a little later, to deal with the Khazars. Another gifted military leader, in 737 he advanced beyond Atil, and defeated the kaghan. The kaghan agreed to accept Islam and to become a subject of the caliph. This dramatic arrangement lasted only three years, thanks both to Umayyad Muslim weakness and to Byzantine support for the Khazars,

and it seems likely that the conversion to Islam of the kaghan did not outlive the political accommodation with the Muslims.

Under the Abbasids, only a decade or so later, things were little different: al-Mansur tried to arrange a marriage between a governor of Armenia and a daughter of the kaghan, but it did not work out satisfactorily, as the woman died in childbirth; the Khazars themselves seem to have leaned towards Byzantium for much of the time. A later caliph, al-Wathiq (227/842–232/847) is said to have sent two embassies to the Khazars; one of these at least, that associated with the name of Sallam the Interpreter, seems to be authentic and to have been despatched with the aim of investigating at first hand the political and military situation of the caliphal frontier in the Caucasus.[2] We possess fairly numerous scattered references of one sort and another to individual Khazars inside the caliphate, and to Khazars in caliphal service. One such reference, apparently unnoticed so far, comes from the year 303/915–16, when we hear of a young Khazar being murdered by someone called Harun b. Gharib al-Khal, in the course of a drunken spree in the caliphal capital, Baghdad.[3] However, perhaps the most notable fact to emerge from our

[2] The identity of this ambassador, like that of the envoy involved in an earlier embassy sent by the same ruler, Muhammad b. Musa al-Khwarizmi, is striking: both were extremely learned men. Al-Khwarizmi (ca. 184/800–ca. 232/847) was a scholar, a scientist, mathematician and astronomer of wide learning, a number of whose works were translated into Latin in Spain some centuries later and had much influence in the development of medieval science and mathematics. See on him the useful article (by Juan Vernet) in *EI*², IV, 1070–71, with much additional bibliography. The second ambassador, Sallam al-Tarjuman, was a high civil servant, but involved in chancery practice, and is said to have known some thirty languages (hence the name by which he is known). See Dunlop (*supra*, n. 1), pp. 190–93. It could be argued that the employment of men like these in such embassies points to broader intellectual curiosity among Muslims; however, it could equally be argued, and possibly with greater force, that it points, more simply, to efficient organisation by government. Dunlop, p. 193, mentions the possibility that Sallam may have been a Khazar, and even perhaps a Khazar Jew, pointing out that 'the name Sallām was occasionally carried by Jews'. This argument seems thin, though it could perhaps be strengthened a little by the fact that we have no father's name given for him.

[3] The incident is reported in the continuation of al-Tabari by 'Arib b. Sa'd al-Qurtubi, *Sila Ta'rikh al-Tabari*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden, Brill, 1897, repr. 1965, pp. 55–56, *sub anno* 303/915–16. We cannot actually be sure, in this case, that the victim really was a Khazar, despite the explicit statement in the source. It is said of him that he was "a man of the Khazars known as J.w'.m.r.d.": it is not difficult to see the Persian for 'young man' behind this apparent identification, and a Persian description of an unknown youth killed in a drunken brawl need not be seen as compelling evidence of a Khazar identity, whatever our source alleges.

material is not the presence of the occasional Khazar from the Caucasus in the sophisticated metropolis of Islam, but the presence of large numbers of Muslims in the Khazar state in the first half of the tenth century (ten thousand at one stage in Atil, their capital, if we are to believe the reports), and the presence in their army of the Arsiya, Muslims who were exempt from fighting against their co-religionists at times of war between the Khazars and Muslims. This is reported by Mas'udi, a contemporary, and may therefore reflect some sort of truth.[4] We cannot know how much truth there may be in the report, but its existence, and the fact of its occurring in a contemporary observer of such overall general reliability as Mas'udi, together encourage the impression of growing Muslim influence. Even if these Muslims were not in the Khazar army as representatives of the caliphal state, what we have here is nevertheless an indication of the penetration of Islam beyond the caliphal frontiers in ways which contrast sharply with the expansion of Islam in other parts of the world in this period; this situation also offers an index of the types of problem to which the Khazar state was now subject, in the last decades of its existence. All the evidence suggests at a minimum a forward policy by a great power.

The relationship between Muslims and Khazars has been viewed variously in the past. It has been fairly normal to see the Muslims as attempting here part of what they are often said to have been trying a little later in the far west. They have been seen as trying to drive ever onwards and conquer the whole of Europe, taking it in a pincer movement of conquests from east and west more or less simultaneously, at least if we take a macro-historical (and, let it be said, perhaps an overly Eurocentric) view. On this view the Muslim campaigns against the Khazars in the first century or so of the Hijra and their attempts to make permanent conquests beyond the line of the Caucasus represent an endeavour to outflank Byzantium in a great *Drang nach Westen*. Such a view, such an ambition, and such a means to attaining it, seem to me alike somewhat far-fetched, despite the undoubted successes of the Muslims and their persistence in trying to maintain and even go beyond them. It requires us to accept that Byzantium had succeeded already at this primary stage in persuading the Muslims that it could not be conquered. It calls for

[4] Translated in Dunlop, pp. 206, 211 f., with discussion.

us to believe that the Muslims (and even some non-Muslims) had a far greater knowledge and understanding of the geography of Europe, east and west, than they actually can be shown to have had at any time before the end of the middle ages.[5] And it also calls for us to suppose the early Muslims to have possessed an extraordinary degree of confidence in their own abilities, one belied by the real limitations of their extraordinary successes on the ground.

Another view that can be adopted is that the constant Muslim conflicts with the Khazars represent something altogether different, namely the desire, on the part of the Muslims, to re-establish the Khazars in their former role, as guardians of the new frontier. On this view, the Khazars should be seen as akin, in terms of seventh-century political analysis, to the Ghassanids or the Lakhmids of the sixth-century Byzantine and Persian frontiers with the deserts of Arabia. This view has perhaps a little more merit to it, especially given what some Arab Muslims at least will have known of the history of their own region in the previous century, as well as reflecting the realities of the situation itself.

And there is a third view, which does not exclude the others. This view, which to my mind has a lot more to it than those others, is the simpler and more economical one, that here as elsewhere in this critical first century of the existence of Islam what Muslim arms were trying to achieve was the extension of the territory which a surprisingly favourable military and political situation (in religious terms Providence?) had made available to them. That is to say, if conquests were available, then they should be made. The direction that such conquests should take, in the sense of an alleged desire, or a supposed strategic aim, to conquer the whole of Europe, is not here the issue. Here were Muslims in the Caucasus, and here were possibilities opening up before them. We have what looks like an example of this more pragmatic approach in 652 (only 20 years after the death of the Prophet) in the campaign of ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Rabiʿa al-Bahili against Balandjar. He was killed, and the large army that he was leading was comprehensively defeated. It is worthy of note here that we are told that this campaign into Khazar territory was undertaken in contravention of standing orders from the caliph (at this time ʿUthman).[6] This may or may not be true—we

[5] Cf. Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982.

[6] Dunlop, p. 55, with refs.

have no way of knowing, especially for this exceedingly early period of the history of Islam. But it is also noteworthy, in this context, that such negative orders are said to have been in existence also on the occasion of other such campaigns of the early period: thus Egypt was conquered in contravention of explicit caliphal orders against even entering the country; and similarly Spain, al-Andalus, somewhat later, at the start of the eighth century, was conquered in disobedience to identical instruction from the caliph (by now someone else: Walid I); and there are doubtless other examples that could be cited. This makes one wonder whether we have here some sort of literary topos—is a caliphal prohibition perhaps a necessary preliminary to the beginning of a great conquest for Islam in the literary-historical tradition? Or alternatively, whether what we have, for what will have been, it should be remembered, an extremely early and disordered and disorganised formative period in the history of the development and growth of the Islamic world empire, is perhaps the truth. (We hear nothing in these sources, by the way, about pincer movements, about ambitions towards the west, and the like.) The rulers in Arabia and in Syria were, understandably, wary of the dangers implicit in campaigns in areas which were unknown but clearly not safe or easy, against opponents whose strengths were largely untried and unmeasured, at enormous distances from Madina or Damascus, distances which made the lines of communication with the troops on the ground, and perhaps also lines of supply, unacceptably long. The dangers involved in such campaigns were obvious—and the chances of success correspondingly impossible to assess. The Umayyad experiences were not such as to encourage reckless adventures in the Caucasus.

What is in fact suggested by our knowledge of Muslim attempts to deal with what may be described as a "Khazar problem" is that the Khazars were seen by Muslim rulers in Damascus and, later, in Baghdad as a potentially very dangerous frontier people who needed to be dealt with as circumstances permitted. Conquest as such was not a realistic policy. Occasional embassies needed to be sent, to conciliate and to threaten, to gather information and to explore possibilities, above all to keep channels of communication open;[7] armed intervention was desirable from time to time, less to conquer or to absorb territories that could be

[7] It is these functions of the ambassador that help to explain the employment of Sallam and, before him, possibly of al-Khwarizmi in this role.

retained and controlled only with difficulty, and more to offer reminders of the realities of caliphal power in the short term and the potential which that power had to do substantial damage to the Khazars in the long run.

2. *The Islamic context of the Jewish aspect of Khazar history*

The Jewish material on the Khazars is of considerable interest in this context too. By the term 'Jewish material' I refer of course to the famous correspondence, between the Andalusi Jewish court official Hasdai ibn Shaprut and the Khazar king Joseph, some of which has been so carefully edited by Norman Golb and Omeljan Pritsak.[8] After their work on this material, there can scarcely remain any doubt about the genuineness of the contacts between the Khazars and the Jews of al-Andalus, or about their importance. I am here not so concerned with the contents of this material. What these texts say is very important in a number of ways, but it is not of direct relevance to my argument here. What is of concern here, to the Islamist, is rather the context in which that material came into existence, the context that permitted it to come into existence, and indeed the ways in which it was able to survive.[9]

The Correspondence, at least that part of it that involves Hasdai ibn Shaprut, is quite extraordinary material, and it is, I think, worth drawing attention here to just how extraordinary it is, from the point of view of the Islamist and the non-Islamist alike. Its creation required a number of different and quite unrelated things to be true, simultaneously. It was necessary for the Khazars to be Jewish. It was necessary for there to be somewhere another Jew who was not only interested in the Khazars but also in a position to do something to try to find out about them. It was necessary for the Khazar state to survive just long enough for

[8] Norman Golb and Omeljan Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the tenth century*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1982.

[9] As to this last, the manner of its survival, we should not be indifferent to the fact that the Cairo Geniza is a unique survival from the Mediterranean middle ages (unique certainly in its size and importance; other survivals of similar type have yielded much less, and much less significant, material). The nature of the Geniza, as a Jewish repository, its character as a way-station to burial of its contents, and the accident of its survival unburied (something which ensured the physical survival of the documents in it) are all vital ingredients in this.

contact between the two to be possible (we need to remember that the bulk of the correspondence belongs to the years immediately before the final collapse—in other words, if Hasdai ibn Shaprut had been active and interested just a very few years later there would have been no possible addressee for him to write to, and he would never have received any answers to his letters). And, finally, and perhaps most importantly, it was necessary that there exist a world, a *Kulturraum*, that provided by Islam, which made the actual creation of a link between the Jew, Hasdai, in the extreme West, and the Khazar, Jewish, state, in the area of the Caucasus, far away in the East, not completely impossible.

Each of these features of the situation, taken on its own, is highly improbable, a fact that we do not remember often enough; each of them is also a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the outcome; all of them together are indispensable. If any one of these conditions had been absent, then the link could not have been made. That we should find all of them in combination producing a series of documents beggars belief. And that these few documents should then in their turn happen to enjoy that curious blessing of the historian, the accident of survival, calls for the utmost caution in studying them and in accepting their authenticity. Yet we do find them, and they do appear to command scholarly acceptance.

It should be noted that the Islamic *Kulturraum* in which all this occurred was not merely where it just happened to occur. It was the special character of this Islamic world that made it all possible. It was the special character of Islamic Spain, al-Andalus, as an Islamic state, and as an Islamic state that was not part of the ʿAbbâsid Islamic state, that propelled Hasdai, a Jew, to what looks to have been a position of some importance. It was the special character of the Mediterranean basin as a largely Islamic lake that made it possible for Jews both to travel widely—as they had more or less ceased to do before the rise of Islam—and to make contact with Jews in other places;[10] it was the special nature of relations between Cordoba, in Islamic Spain, and Constantinople that encouraged in Hasdai the idea that he could make contact with the

[10] One of the best-known travellers of the period is one such Jew from al-Andalus, Ibrahim b. Yaʿqub, who travelled in eastern Europe, and of whose writings about his travels we have a few, important, fragments. See the entry on him in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, III, p. 991 (by André Miquel).

Khazars.[11] All of this would have been wholly impossible before the rise of Islam.

A glance at the situation of late Roman and Byzantine Jewries makes clear how very greatly the advent of Islam changed things for the Jews everywhere, for the better. And another glance at the nature of the new world created in the Mediterranean basin by Islam helps to explain the conversion to Judaism of the Khazars as it also explains the world-view, in a literal sense, of Jews and others of the tenth century. Jews were part of the world of Islam, as their situation in it was a function of the character of that world. These Hebrew documents are in an important sense, therefore, part of what we should see as the evidence of links, of information and more, between the Khazars and the world of Islam. It was the Islamic world that created a new environment and a new sense of what was normal and possible in that environment.

It is almost certainly this also that lies behind the well-known (modern?) legend of the survival and flight to Spain of members of the Khazar royal family following the collapse of the mid-tenth century.[12] That legend itself seems to be an outgrowth of a self-interested remark in Ibn Daud, writing in the middle of the twelfth century, to the effect that there were a few Khazars in Toledo in his own day.[13] We may with some justice doubt the truth of the statement—as we doubt other details in that writer's text (though no one seems to doubt this one)—but the notion of a few Khazars coming so far in the middle ages becomes less wholly unacceptable when we consider that the great bulk of the journey would have been conceived of as taking place within the oikoumene of Islam.

3. *The meaning of the materials on the Khazars in Islamic sources*

That oikoumene had its boundaries, and the Khazar kingdom lay definitely on those boundaries, neither completely inside them nor wholly

---

[11] David Wasserstein, 'Byzantium and al-Andalus', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 2, 1987, pp. 76–101.

[12] See the end of the entry 'Chazars', in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, IV, pp. 1–7, at p. 6, 'Many members of the Chazarian royal family emigrated to Spain'. We might compare the legends about the flight of the Prophet Jeremiah to Ireland.

[13] Abraham ibn Daud, *The Book of Tradition, Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, a critical edition with a translation and notes by Gerson D. Cohen, London, 1967, Hebrew text, p. 68, Eng. trans. 92–93 (All that we find here is that 'We have also seen some of their descendants in Toledo, scholars…'; nothing here about members of the royal family).

beyond them. The early wars against the Khazars settled down eventually to an uneasy state of no peace, no war, ending finally with the disappearance of the Khazars as an independent people. But even in the worst period for the Khazars, defeated, with their kaghan a less than eager convert to Islam, the Khazars had never become fully part of the Islamic world-empire, and they had never really either become part of the fully known world of Islam and its surroundings. They had remained always just on the edge.[14] The Caucasus was after all very difficult terrain; it was very far away; and it did not, when all was said and done, have so very much to offer. Muslim geographical writers mention them in some little abundance. We have a large and quite varied selection of writers who offer a few sentences each about this people. But if we look at these texts closely then three principal features emerge. First, for centuries, Muslim writers just copy material about the Khazars from each other; most of what we find can be traced back to a single very early source. While this may indicate that we have some good early material here, and while it may also suggest something quite impressive about the ability of early Muslims to ferret out, collect, preserve and transmit such material to their successors, it also suggests other things: in particular lack of access to newer material and also perhaps lack of interest in acquiring more. Secondly, much of what is reported is of a type with what we hear of other outlandish peoples living just on or over the edge of the Islamic world. Despite what we can confirm from other sources, there must always be a nagging worry about how far unconfirmed elements in all of these reports represent merely what might be termed the "invention of the savage" in classical Islam or the perhaps natural tendency of medieval writers about such areas to let their material grow. Dunlop mentions, for example, that one of the reports that we have of the embassy of Sallam al-Tarjuman speaks of 'an island of sheep', while another tells us that, while he was with the Khazar king, Sallam saw a mermaid.[15] And thirdly, there really is not all that much there: the motif of the dual kingship; some information about the variety of their religious life (but can we really believe that they had so many mosques or that there were really ten thousand Muslims in Atil?); the geography of their capital and

[14] The echo here of the title of R.W. Bulliet's *Islam, the View from the Edge*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, is deliberate.

[15] Dunlop (n. 1, *supra*), p. 192, citing the stories from Qazwini, of the seventh/thirteenth century.

a little about nomadism, and their relationships to other such peoples, and so on. But there is not very much beyond this. Ibn al-Nadim, a bibliographer, not a geographical writer, offers an isolated report to the effect that the Khazars wrote in Hebrew. He is writing in the middle of the tenth century, which makes the report all the more intriguing. And it is also striking in this connection that the only surviving texts that we have from the Khazars should be, in the Correspondence, in that language. But Ibn al-Nadim tells us nothing more than this about their cultural activity, and we hear nothing at all reliable about this from any other source, so it is difficult even to know how far we can accept that statement, let alone build anything on it.[16] Ibn al-Nadim himself is curiously uninterested in non-Muslims. What he tells us here is part of a broadbrush introduction to his work in which he gives some information about cultural and literary activity in world societies as a preface to a work on literary writing in Arabic—and there is no information at all about such material emerging from Khazar Muslims, nor even of the identities of any Khazar 'ulama'. Regardless of the actual figures that our sources proffer, if there really were such a large Muslim community in the Khazar state, not to mention some thousands of Muslim soldiers, we should expect there also to have been, by the tenth century, some 'ulama' there who might have entered the historical record. There are not. What all this adds up to is an image of the Khazars in classical and later Islam which is slight and uninformed, rough at the edges and conforming to a pattern developed for nations outside, but only just outside, the boundaries of the known world, the world of Islam. We may note that no Muslim writer seems to think that the Khazars, as Jews, partook in Jewish culture as this was known to Muslims (apart from the isolated remark of Ibn al-Nadim noted above);[17] nor do they suggest that the

[16] *The Fihrist of al-Nadim, A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, ed. and trans. Bayard Dodge, New York, Columbia University Press (Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies, no. LXXXIII), 1970, pp. 36–37: 'The Turks, the Bulgar, the Blaghā', the Burghaz, the Khazar, the Llān, and the types with small eyes and extreme blondness have no script, except that the Bulgarians and the Tibetans write with Chinese and Manichaean, whereas the Khazar write Hebrew'.

[17] This may not be so very surprising: ignorance of the life and culture of the Jews seems to be more the norm than detailed knowledge of or interest in them among Muslims of the classical period. Cf. D.J. Wasserstein, 'The Muslims and the Golden Age of the Jews in al-Andalus', *Israel Oriental Studies*, XVII, 1997, pp. 179–96.

Khazars might offer any sort of external protection to the Jews living under Islamic rule, on the pattern later developed by Christian states for Christians in the world of Islam, or even have any special links with their Jewish brethren in the Islamic world.

Conclusion

The Khazars were not unimportant; they enjoyed some significance at certain periods, and in a very few places, essentially during the formative period of the empire. The struggle with them was part of the initial boundary-setting and hence self-definition of Islam; anything that happened thereafter was not much more than a temporary disturbance of those boundaries. Their religious identity as Jews did not make them an object of great interest to Islam, not so much because they were Jews and belonged to a despised religion, but rather because of a more general Muslim lack of interest in the outside world, at least once the essential information about them as dwellers on the Islamic edge had been obtained and digested.

I stress the unknown over the known, the unknowable over what we can know, quite deliberately here. Those who have studied the Islamic materials on the Khazars in the past, pre-eminently Dunlop, have extracted from those materials as much as they can reasonably be expected to yield. But these sources can also be compared with those for other groups in similar situations. I refer not only to such groups as the Celts as they appear in ancient, Latin and Greek, literary sources;[18] we can compare also, for example, the peoples of Africa in medieval Arabic sources or, perhaps with greater justice, the nations of western Europe.[19] If we consider what our sources tell us of what medieval Muslims actually knew of medieval Christian Europe, of its peoples and its geography, of its religion and its cultural life, its trade and its politics, then it is also

[18] See, for example, Barry Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1997, esp. pp. 1–10, where he stresses the importance of the literary sources for the proper interpretation of the principal evidence, that derived fron archaeology; H.D. Rankin, *Celts and the Classical World*, London and Sydney, Croom Helm, 1987, esp. p. 1; id., 'The Celts through classical eyes', in Miranda Green, ed., *The Celtic World*, London and New York, Routledge, 1995, pp. 21–33.

[19] N. Levtzion and J.F.P. Hopkins, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, trans. J.F.P. Hopkins, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981; and Lewis, above, n. 5.

not all that much. (The link with al-Andalus can be discounted here. That distorts the matter somewhat, but it does not change it fundamentally.) Lack of interest, together with lack of access to new materials, offer a general explanation of this phenomenon. But there is a little more to it than this.

Relative ignorance of the Khazars on the part of the Muslims must be seen in a context. That context has two faces. On the one hand there is the fact that the Khazars themselves disappeared early into the mists of a largely unrecorded history: unlike the Jews elsewhere, or the Christians of the Middle East, or the other nations and groups which were in their different ways absorbed into the Islamic world, the Khazars disappeared completely, and they had of course never been fully part of that world. Secondly, there came a point, once classical Islamic civilisation became sufficiently strong and confident in and of itself, when it simply became less interested in the world outside. This is evident in its geographical or ethnographic writing, which is endlessly repetitive of earlier writing, as in other aspects of its cultural life. That we should find little information overall, and that repeated in different forms from one writer to another as time goes by, should not surprise us very much. As in the case of the ancient Roman world, as Claude Nicolet has reminded us,[20] so too, as André Miquel has pointed out for Islam, the new world empire of Islam was simply so large and varied that it could be seen as encompassing the whole world, or all of it that really mattered. The Muslims invented a world, and the Khazars did not really belong.

[20] Claude Nicolet, *L'Invention du Monde: Géographie et politique aux origines de l'Empire romain*, Paris, Fayard, 1988; André Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11e siècle*, Paris, La Haye, New York, Mouton, Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre de Recherches historiques, Civilisations et Sociétés, vols. 7, 37, 60, 1967–80.

YIDDISH EVIDENCE FOR THE KHAZAR COMPONENT IN THE ASHKENAZIC ETHNOGENESIS

Paul Wexler

Two areas of research that can promise immediate and indisputable contributions to our understanding of Khazar civilization are the archaeology of the sites in the Empire and the reanalysis of extant historical documentation. A third topic, the fate of the Judaized Khazar population after the collapse of the Empire in the late 10th century at the hands of Kievan Rus' and specifically the possibility of a Khazar component in the Ashkenazic ethnogenesis, has for a long time greatly excited the curiosity of scholars and laymen alike but suffered from a dearth of convincing evidence (see e.g. Koestler 1976). It is, however, unlikely that the first two areas of research cited above will significantly elucidate the third question.

I believe that there are two major and three minor avenues of research available for uncovering the whereabouts of the Khazar Jews: the major avenues are linguistics and toponymics. The relatively minor avenues of research are numismatics, history and the archaeology of Khazars outside their Empire; a potentially promising avenue of research is genetics. Searching for Khazarisms or Hebraisms in languages presumed to have been in contact with Khazar Turkic is not very revealing of the fate of the Khazar Jews since the linguistic contacts could have taken place *in situ* before the collapse of the Khazar empire and the evaluation of the data is complicated by our ignorance of the Khazar language (see references in Wexler 1987: 72, 211–212; 2002: 515). Toponymic evidence, on the other hand, can show the extent of Khazar settlement both before and after the 10th century, e.g. a recent study by Lewicki (1988) shows Turkic Khazars (including Jewish Khazars) prior to the 10th century accompanying other ethnic groups into Hungary, Serbia, Rumania, Poland, Moravia, Slovakia, and Austria (see also Wexler 2002: 219, 530 ff.).

I believe that there is one unexpected source, yet untapped, that can confirm a Khazar component in the Ashkenazic ethnogenesis: the Yiddish language. This suggestion may come as a surprise since Yiddish lacks typical Turkic linguistic features, such as vowel harmony and a

basically agglutinative structure. Nor does the Yiddish lexicon reveal a rich corpus of unique Turkic or Iranian elements unattested in the coterritorial and contiguous Eastern Slavic languages or Polish (for examples, see Wexler 2002: 87–88, 124–5, 150, 166, 171, 310–311, 359, 467, 510, 513, 519–520, 522; Poljak 1951: 315–323, intriguingly, had a brief chapter on the genesis of the Yiddish language in his book claiming that the Ashkenazic Jews were descended from Khazars, but gave neither convincing evidence nor analysis). Given the fact that most of the Ashkenazic territory, along with a great many Jewish communities from the Middle East to China, were under Mongol domination during the 13th century, some putative Yiddish Khazarisms may prove to be of some other Turkic or Mongolian provenience. However, one possibly Khazar Turkic feature in Yiddish may be the so-called "periphrastic" conjugation, whereby indeclinable Hebrew verbal elements are usually combined with the Yiddish auxiliary verbs 'to be(come)', as in Yiddish *bojdek zajn* 'to examine' (< Hebrew *bōdeq* 'examining; he examines' + the German 'to be'). This pattern might ultimately be of Khazar origin, since Turkic and Iranian languages also have this conjugation for the integration of Arabic verbal material; it is lacking in Western Yiddish (i.e. Judaized German) and in German and German-derived slang lexicons (such as Hungarian and Slavic) that utilize a sizeable Hebrew component (primarily of Yiddish origin) but is attested in Judaized variants of Eastern Slavic in the 17th century (Wexler 1987: 98–99; 2002: 522–524). The geography of the construction thus suggests an Eastern origin.

I do not accept the common view that Yiddish is a form of German. I believe that Yiddish arose approximately between the 9th and 12th centuries when Jews in the mixed Germano-(Upper) Sorbian lands of present-day Germany "relexified" their native Sorbian, a West Slavic language, to High German (and to a lesser extent, Hebrew or Hebroid and unique, mainly Balkan Romance) phonetic strings (on the process of relexification, a factor in the genesis of many creole and non-creole languages, see below and Horvath and Wexler 1997). I strongly suspect that the Sorbian Jews descend primarily from Balkan, and possibly also Caucasian, Slavo-Avar and German Slavic converts to Judaism. "Sorbian Yiddish" was brought to the Kiev-Polessian lands in the 15th century (in modern terms, northern Ukraine and southern Belarus'), where it was not adopted blindly by the indigenous Slavic Jews. Rather, the latter *adapted* it, by relexifying a second time, this time from Eastern Slavic to Yiddish vocabulary. In the process, they also accepted new German words that were not originally licensed for Yiddish and

discarded some existing Germanisms which were incompatible with the specific requirements of Kiev-Polessian (see discussion of Yiddish *tejl* below). A pre-Ashkenazic Jewry in Eastern Europe has to be primarily of Khazar origin; by the time of the Ashkenazic arrival in Eastern Europe, the descendants of the Khazar Jews were apparently Eastern Slavic-speaking. The latter may have been attracted to Yiddish thinking that it was a form of German, a language of high prestige in Central and Eastern Europe, and/or because of respect for Ashkenazic culture. They preferred to relexify to Yiddish because it would have been relatively easy just to learn new words; they could have retained most of their native Eastern Slavic grammar, which was sufficiently close to the original Western Slavic grammar of Yiddish. The ability to relexify Kiev-Polessian to Sorbian Yiddish and to influence the latter suggests that the Eastern Slavic Jews outnumbered the Ashkenazic emigrés coming from the West—though historians always claim the reverse without ever providing the slightest factual substantiation. The Sorbs, Avars and Khazars who converted to Judaism in the late first millennium (the evidence for this is both direct and indirect: see Wexler 1993b) must have been the major if not sole players on the stage of the "Ashkenazic" ethnogenesis and the prime initiators of the two relexification processes.

Why would Slavic-speaking Jews relexify? The most compelling explanation is that the confrontation of Germans and Slavs was resulting in the widespread erosion or extinction of Sorbian language, religion and culture, leaving the Jews increasingly isolated from the Christianizing and Germanizing Slavs. Relexification rather then shift to German might have struck the Jews as a good way to avoid Christianization—a concomitant factor in the Germanization process. Furthermore, Judaism might have been attractive to pagan Sorbs because no political commitments were involved (unlike Christianity which entailed espousing German language, and cultural hegemony), and because Judaism offered Sorbs an opportunity to escape the status of slaves which was being imposed by German settlers on the pagan Slavs and to preserve their Slavic culture and language. In the east, the desire of the Khazar ruling class to preserve neutrality vis-à-vis the Byzantine Christians and the Baghdad Arab Caliphate, along with the cultural influences of visiting Jewish merchants made Judaism popular. Relexification is always motivated by a desire to create a new ethnic identity, i.e. by *identificatory* rather than communicative needs. This is tantamount to suggesting that non-Jews who joined the Jewish community before the 1200s (when both Christianity and Islam became firmly institutionalized) may

have sought a unique linguistic analogue to their new ethno-religious identity, i.e. it was largely they who were responsible for the creation of Yiddish. The near-universal acceptance of Yiddish in the area between Franconia in the west and Ukraine in the east suggests that converts to Judaism may have outnumbered "ethnic Jews".

The value of Yiddish to Khazar studies lies precisely in the fact that Yiddish grammar is clearly Slavic in origin; only the vocabulary of Yiddish is predominantly German. This means that Yiddish is a Slavic rather than a Germanic language (see my 1991, 1993b, 2002). While Yiddish began in the mixed Germano-Sorbian lands as a Western Slavic grammar with a predominantly German and not insignificant Hebrew lexical component, it was acquired by Jewish speakers of Eastern Slavic by the latest in the 15th century in the Kiev-Polessian lands (though possibly even in the 10th century from Ashkenazic traders visiting Kiev, as well as in Central Europe among migrating Khazar Jews). Contemporary Eastern Yiddish can thus be described as the products (and partial merger) of two relexification processes from Western and Eastern Slavic. The Kiev-Polessian Jews (now Slavic-speaking) altered the Sorbian grammar to fit the norms of their related Eastern Slavic grammar; while accepting most of the Yiddish lexicon, these Jews also added new Germanisms. Since it is highly unlikely that the Eastern Slavic grammatical features found in Yiddish could result from the Slavicization of an originally Germanic language (see details below), I must assume that there was a sufficiently large Eastern Slavic-speaking Jewry in Ukraine and Belarus' that could have radically influenced the development of the imported "Sorbian" Yiddish grammar. In other words, Yiddish provides circumstantial evidence that the Khazar Jews became assimilated to Eastern Slavic language by the late 10th century (if not sooner), and apparently settled widely throughout the Kievan Rus' Principality, in addition to migrating into Central Europe (see Lewicki 1988, Wexler 2002: 530–533).

It is very important to understand the nature of the phenomenon known as "relexification". The latter is often confused with widespread borrowing, but the two processes have little in common (for details and examples of other languages, see Horvath and Wexler 1997). In borrowing, the speaker takes usually words from another language and typically uses them in the manner of the source language (though, subsequently, the borrowing language can innovate in the use of the loans). Usually, the volume of lexical borrowing is modest, though it can sometimes become the majority component (witness the Romance component in

English or the Arabic and Iranian components in pre-Reform Turkish). In relexification, the speaker converts all of his original vocabulary into foreign words but uses the latter only with the meanings and derivational behavior of the former. There is also no automatic change in the grammar of the relexifiers. Hence, it is more precise to say that in relexification the speaker borrows foreign "phonetic strings" with no meanings. On the surface, the "relexified" language looks like it is related to the language that provided the lexicon; hence, not surpisingly, Yiddish has always struck most native speakers and non-native observers alike as a (distorted or unique) form of High German. Other Slavic languages which have undergone relexification are Ashkenazic and Modern Hebrew (both of which are Yiddish grammar relexified to Classical Hebrew), Esperanto (Yiddish relexified to Latinoid lexicon), some forms of contemporary Sorbian (German relexified to Sorbian lexicon) and Ukrainian and Belarusian (Russian relexified to Ukrainian and Belarusian lexicon) and Old Church Slavic (Greek relexified to a mixed Western-Eastern-Southern Slavic lexicon). Confirmed non-Slavic languages created via relexification number about two dozen worldwide (Horvath and Wexler 1997, Wexler 2002: 23–24).

Another feature of borrowing in the context of language contact is that there is no way to predict what elements of the lexicon, phonology or grammar will be borrowed. On the other hand, a distinctive property of relexification is that we are in a position to predict what words will be accepted by the relexifying language. This is because relexifiers can only accept foreign phonetic strings that can be calibrated according to their original replaced elements. In other words, Sorbian- and Ukrainian-speaking Jews could only accept from German words that did not violate the derivational norms of Sorbian and Ukrainian (see examples below).

The ability to predict the lexicon of a language is a crucial test for prior relexification in the language. To establish this test for Yiddish, I collected in Wexler 2002 a corpus of some 600 sets of German roots, generating a grand total of over 3500 individual words (this corpus will be vastly expanded as Wexler [ms]). I compared this corpus with the Sorbian and Ukrainian translation equivalents, pretending not to know the lexicon of Yiddish. If Yiddish were really Sorbian and Kiev-Polessian that had become relexified to High German vocabulary, it should be possible to predict which German words out of the 3500 examples could be accepted by Yiddish and which would have to be rejected. In place of the rejected Germanisms, the Sorbian and Khazar Jews would have

had six alternative sources of enrichment: they could (a) invent unique German words and meanings, (b) use other German words which were not rejected, (c) retain original Slavic words, (d) borrow Hebrew words, (e) invent Hebrew ("Hebroid") words, and (f) utilize unique Romanisms and Hellenisms which earlier Jews had acquired in the Balkans en route to the Sorb lands (see Wexler 1992). All sources have been utilized simultaneously. The blockage of so much German vocabulary explains why the German component of Yiddish is so impoverished compared to that of any dialect of German, especially in the domain of synonyms. Indeed, of all the approximately two dozen known Jewish languages (e.g. Judeo-Spanish, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Chinese, Judeo-Greek, etc.: see Wexler 1981, 1993a), Yiddish has by far the most Hebrew and Hebroid components. The explanation for this astounding fact is that Yiddish was "created" via relexification (from Slavic). The Hebraisms were required to replace the thousands of blocked Germanisms. Armed with predictions, I went to the most puristically oriented Yiddish dictionary, that of Weinreich 1968, for confirmation. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that in about 95% of the cases, my predictions were correct (see Wexler 2002). Consider the following two examples:

1. German has two forms of a single root to denote 'name' and 'to name': *Name* and *nennen.* I predicted that the Sorbian Jews would only accept one of the terms, because in Sorbian and Eastern Slavic languages originally 'name' and 'to name' were expressed by different roots, see Ukrainian *im'ja* 'name' but *zvaty(sja)* 'to name'. It so happens that the Sorbian Jews took only German *Name*—see Yiddish *nomen*. For *nennen*, Yiddish uses a different Germanism, *rufn (zix)*—where the reflexive particle *zix* imitates the Ukrainian use of synonymous *-sja.*
2. I predicted that German *Zweifel* 'doubt' (< *zwei* 'two') could not be borrowed by Yiddish since Slavic languages (unless they are influenced by German, such as modern Sorbian and Croatian) do not form the term 'doubt' from 'two'. See e.g. Ukrainian *sumniv* 'doubt', *sumnivatysja* 'to doubt' vs. *dva, dvi* 'two'. Therefore, Yiddish should lack German *Zweifel*; indeed, only Germanizing speakers in the last century have accepted the latter as *cvejfl*. I can then predict that the Yiddish word for 'doubt' will be either real Hebrew, pseudo-Hebrew (Hebroid), Slavic or an innovative Germanism. It turns out to be Hebrew *sâfeq* (plural *sfeqôt*) > Yiddish *sofek* (plural *sfejkes*) 'doubt', *zajn mesupek, zajn in sofek*, *sofken* 'to doubt'.

There are a number of other diagnostic tests that strongly suggest the existence of relexification. One important test is when the grammar and phonology of a language have a different origin from that of the bulk of the vocabulary. This test is readily met by Yiddish, since the Germanic component is almost exclusively in the vocabulary, while Yiddish phonology and grammar tend to follow Slavic norms; conversely, the Slavic lexical component of any Yiddish dialect never exceeds 10% of the total, and most of the items are recent post-relexification loans from Eastern Slavic and Polish (approximately 75% of the vocabulary is High German and 15% Hebraisms and innovative Hebroidisms). As expected in relexification, most of the original Sorbian and Kiev-Polessian words have been relexified.

By comparing the lexicons of the putative unrelexified substratal and superstratal lexifier languages, it is possible to predict with extremely high accuracy which Germanisms will be acceptable in Yiddish, and therefore, where Yiddish will acquire Hebraisms, Hebroidisms and/or retain unrelexified Slavisms. No other model of Yiddish genesis can make predictions about the component structure of the language.

There are four rules for the blockage of Germanisms in Yiddish: (i) German morphophonemic alternations and derivational morphology are blocked in Yiddish unless they enjoy Sorbian and/or Kiev-Polessian parallels. German derivational sets rarely surface in Yiddish *in toto,* see e.g. Yiddish *štark(er)* 'strong(er)' vs. German *stark: stärker* ~ Ukrainian *kripkyj: kripšyj* with a stable root. The few examples of German Ablaut relationships that are accepted by Yiddish are invariably matched by a Slavic pair, see e.g. German *Schweiss* 'sweat'/*schwitzen* 'to sweat' > Yiddish *švejs*/*švicn*, since a single root (also with alternations) is used in Slavic to express the noun/verb pair, see e.g. Sorbian *pót*/*poćić so,* Uk *pit/potytysja* (the reflexive *so/-sja* is not copied by Yiddish—at least not now). (ii) German roots are blocked in Yiddish if Slavic translation equivalents do not broadly overlap semantically. (iii) Yiddish tends to select German synonyms in accordance with the lexical inventory of Slavic.

(iv) German roots which match roots with similar form and meaning in Slavic (the words in question may or may not be cognates) were usually blocked in Yiddish, since they were apparently perceived as Slavic elements. There are four types of common lexicon: (a) German words > Slavic; (b) Slavic > German; (c) cognates; (d) non-cognates with chance similarity in form and meaning. Examples that fall under headings (a) and (c-d) are blocked for relexification; only examples

in (b) are potential Yiddish words (usually in their German form, e.g. Yiddish *bajč* 'whip', *blince* 'pancake'). For example, German *Witwe(r)* 'widow(er)' was blocked in Yiddish because of the existence of a close cognate Sorbian *wudowa* f, *wudowc* m. Thus Yiddish uses *almone* f, *almen* m < Hebrew. Drosdowski 1989 believes German *Witwe(r)* may be related to *Waise* 'orphan'; both Germanisms are absent in Yiddish, which suggests relexifiers may indeed have regarded the two allomorphs as related. Slavic lacks a parallel, though Sorbian *syrota* f, Ukrainian *syrota* m, f 'orphan' are ultimately related to Lithuanian *šeirỹs* 'widower' (Schuster-Šewc 1978–1996: 1402). Hence, Yiddish acquired *josem* m, *jesojme* f 'orphan' (with unique gender differentiation); note that *almen* 'widower' is a Hebroidism since Old Hebrew *'almān* meant only 'alone, forsaken'. Another example of cognate blockage is German *Schwein* 'pig' and derivatives, due to Slavic cognates, see e.g. Sorbian *swinjo*, Ukrainian *svynja*; Yiddish has instead *xazer* < Hebrew and *ljoxe* < Ukrainian *l'oxa*. (The same constraint on relexifying to cognates explains why the Arabic-speaking Judaized Berbers in Spain blocked most of the Arabic component of Spanish when they relexified from Judeo-Arabic to Castilian before the Expulsion: see Wexler 1996.)

Moreover, contemporary Yiddish dialectological evidence can even suggest that the Slavic-speaking descendants of the Khazars probably moved, after the collapse of their kingdom (or, by the latest, after the Mongolian invasion of Kiev in 1240) northward into Černihiv and Belarus' and to the west and south into Halyč and eastern Poland, areas less endangered by the Mongolian invasion. This is because the Slavic component in Yiddish is often from southern and western Belarusian and northern Ukrainian dialects—precisely the area of the original Kiev-Polessian dialect up to its disappearance in the early 15th century (Šerech 1953).

In addition, it can be shown that the Yiddish assignment of gender to German and Hebrew nouns in Yiddish can only fully be motivated by reference to Sorbian and Ukrainian/Belarusian grammar. Thus, Yiddish *tejl(n)* 'part' < German *Teil(e)* has either masculine gender (like German) or feminine gender (like the Slavic translation equivalents, e.g. Ukrainian, Belarusian *častka*). Native Sorbian *dźěl* m 'part' (with a diphthong) probably initially prevented Yiddish from accepting cognate German *Teil* due to formal and semantic similarity; in that case, Yiddish *tejl* is best regarded as an acquisition of the second relexification phase, unless Ukrainian *dil* m 'part, share' was perceived as a cognate. Given the existence of Yiddish *xejlek* m 'section, part, share, portion' from

Hebrew, *tejl* may have been acquired only after the termination of the two relexification processes. Hence, it is possible often to hypothesize whether a Germanism was most likely accepted by Yiddish via relexification, or therafter.

The Yiddish preference for two German plural suffixes *-(e)n, -er* and Hebrew *-ōt* (> Yiddish *-[e]s*), and the concomitant rejection of other German plural suffixes and strategies (e.g. *-e*, voicing of the final consonant, internal vowel change alone), also find a smooth explanation in the fact that by chance Slavic grammars have a small set of similar-sounding unproductive noun-stem infixes which are now associated often with the plural number, see e.g. Ukrainian *maty* 'mother', plural *matery* (with *-er-*), *nebo* 'sky, heaven', plural *nebesa* (with *-es-*), *im'ja* 'name', plural *imena* (with *-en-*). In the matter of grammatical morphemes, similarity of form and meaning is not a barrier, but rather facilitates relexification.

In this context, I can also say that Yiddish probably once had a dual number, which it inherited from its Sorbian substratum, but which became extremely productive in the Eastern Slavic milieu (Sorbian, along with Slovene, retains the Common Slavic dual category, though not without far-reaching changes). Nowadays, Yiddish no longer has a dual number; the category is also lacking in German. The evidence for my claim comes from the fact that the distribution of the plural suffix *-(e)n* in German differs radically from that of *-(e)n* with Yiddish nouns of German origin. Yiddish *-(e)n* even appears with some Hebrew nouns (e.g. *jam* 'sea'). Curiously, the Yiddish use of *-(e)n* with German and some Hebrew nouns (only some of which denote a paired object, such as 'eye', ear', etc.) can usually be correlated with the distribution of the Ukrainian and Belarusian "pseudo-dual"—the use of a special plural suffix after the numbers 2, 3, 4 consisting of the plural ending with the stress of the singular stem. Consider again Yiddish *tejl(n)* 'part' (vs. German *Teil[e]*), which matches the pseudo-dual of Ukrainian *částka* 'part', plural *častký* but *dvi částky* 'two parts'; the corresponding Belarusian *částka* lacks (at least presently) a special plural form after 2, 3, 4—see Belarusian (*dzve*) *částki* '(two) parts', with no movement of stress to license the pseudo-dual. The pseudo-dual is considerably more productive in contemporary Ukrainian than in Belarusian, and the corpus of Yiddish nouns with *-(e)n* (where German requires a different plural suffix) offers a much better match with Ukrainian than with Belarusian. Such facts suggest that the original Slavic-speaking Jewry resided in the Kiev-Polessian Principality for the most part (what is now Ukraine and possibly southern Belarus').

Our ability to predict which German words will be accepted by Yiddish (often accompanied by the ability to suggest whether a Germanism was accepted by Yiddish in the first Sorbian or in the second Kiev-Polessian relexification stage), and where Hebraisms (or newly invented Hebroidisms) will appear in Yiddish (along with other, less powerful, indices not discussed here), dramatically support the Relexification Hypothesis for Yiddish. If Yiddish were indeed a German dialect that had undergone intense Slavicization over a period of 700 years of contact with Slavic languages, as the traditional (and still majority) theory erroneously holds, we would expect Slavic impact to appear on all levels of the language and in a haphazard, non-predictable way. And that is largely not the case. Furthermore, how could the imaginary Slavicization of a Germanic Yiddish possibly account for the high volume of Hebraisms in Yiddish? Another dilemma for the view that Yiddish becames a heavily Slavicized form of German is that Colonial German dialects in Central and Eastern Europe (allegedly very closely related to Yiddish itself) were in contact with Slavic for even longer than Yiddish and yet they do not manifest a profound "Slavicization" (see Weinreich 1958). Nor do other languages long in contact with Slavic, such as Romani and obsolescent Karaite (for the belief that the Karaites are of Khazar origin, see Zajączkowski 1947). The Slavic "imprint" of Yiddish is thus hardly ascribable to many centuries of alleged contact with Slavic.

The fact that Yiddish is a Slavic language has important implications for the ethnogenesis of the Ashkenazic Jews. Ethnographic evidence also suggests that the Jewish religion and folk culture are largely of Slavic, pre-Christian origin; subsequently, many of the latter customs were "Judaized" by linkage to similar Palestinian Jewish religious and folk patterns (on the "Judaization" of non-Jewish practices, see my 1991, 1993b). Establishing an Ashkenazic-Khazar connection would strengthen the claim that the bulk of the Ashkenazic Jews were of Slavo-Turkic (or Turko-Slavic) rather than Palestinian Semitic origin, just as a study of other Jewish languages and ethnographies has led me to suspect similar non-Jewish origins for other "Jewish" groups (see my 1996 on the largely Berber origins of the Sephardic Jews).

The renewal of Khazar studies, in turn, can provide valuable input to Yiddish linguistics, by uncovering further details about the westward Khazar migration into Central Europe before and after the collapse of the Khazar Empire. Up until now, I have assumed that the Jews who resided in the mixed Germano-Sorbian lands beginning with the 9th

century were of Balkan origin (the centuries-old theory that the Ashkenazic Jews are predominantly of French and Italian origin has absolutely no factual basis, as I tried to show in Wexler 1992 and 1993b). The evidence for the Balkan connection lies in (a) the unique Romance component of Yiddish unattested in German dialects, which proves to be of Italian, Rhaeto-Romance and Balkan Romance, but never French, origin, in (b) the considerable archaeological and historical attestation of Jews throughout the Balkans and Panonnia (in contrast to relatively sparse attestation in central France and Italy), and especially in the Judeo-Turkic findings in southwest Hungary and the Vojevodina (Serbia—see e.g. the Avar necropolis at Čelarevo studied by Bunardzić 1980, 1985 and discussion of Lewicki 1988 above), and, finally, in (c) the religious practices of Jews in Western Slavic lands (including present-day eastern Germany) which bear resemblances with Byzantine Jewish ritual. A putative migration of Jews from the Balkans to eastern Germany (and from there into western Germany and northern France) finds a parallel in the Balkan "Serbs" who migrated to the German lands where they became "Sorbs" after the 6th century (on the latter topic, see Kunstmann 1987). In view of Lewicki's findings, there is now the possibility that the Sorbian Jews may be mainly of both Balkan Avar and Caucasian Khazar origins, and that it is the latter who greatly expanded the original small Mediterranean Jewish founder component.

By chance, one week after the international Khazar colloquium was held, geneticists (unaware of the Khazar colloquium) met at an international conference near Jerusalem under the auspices of Tel-Aviv University to explore the origins of the Ashkenazic Jews and their diseases. Whatever origins geneticists choose to posit for the speakers of Yiddish (as well as other Jewish languages), the evidence that has been accumulating in the last eight years since the two conferences increasingly shows that Yiddish was born of Slavic stock (see now Wexler [ms.])—to be sure, with a unique history within the Slavic family of languages. It will be exciting to see in the coming years whether the Ashkenazic Jews turn out to be in the main Slavic-speaking Semites or Slavic-speaking Slavo-Turks (or Turko-Slavs)!

References

Bunardžić, R. (1980). *Izložba menore iz Čelareva*. Belgrade: Savez jevrejskih opština Jugoslavije.

——, (1985). *Čelarevo. Risultati delle ricerche nelle necropoli dell'alto medioevo.* Rome-Novi Sad: Museo della città, Novi Sad.
Drosdowski, G. (ed.) (1989). *Duden* 7. *Etymologie. Herkunftswörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*. Mannheim-Leipzig-Vienna-Zurich: Duden.
Horvath, J. and P.Wexler (eds.) (1997). *Relexification in creole and non-creole languages. (With special reference to Modern Hebrew, Haitian Creole, Romani and Rumanian.)* Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
Koestler, A. (1976). *The thirteenth tribe. The Khazar empire and its heritage*. London: Hutchinson.
Kunstmann, H. (1987). *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Besiedlung Nord- und Mitteldeutschland mit Balkanslaven*. Munich: Kubon and Sagner.
Lewicki, T. (1988). Kabarowie (Kawarowie) na Rusi, na Węgrzech i w Polsce we wczesnym średniowieczu. *Studia nad etnogenezą Słowian i kulturą Europy wczesno-średniowiecznej,* eds. G. Labuda and S. Tabaczyński, 2: 77–87, Wrocław-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź: Zakład im. Ossolińskich.
Poljak, A.N. (1951). *Kazarja. Toldot mamlaxa jehudit be'eropa*. Tel-Aviv: Mosad Bialik. Revised third edition.
Schuster-Šewc, H. (1978–1996). *Historisch-etymologisches Wörterbuch der ober- und niedersorbischen Sprache* 1–24, plus a separate index. Bautzen: (VEB) Domowina-Verlag.
Šerech, Y. (1953). *Problems in the formation of Belorussian*. (Supplement to *Word*, monograph 2.) New York: Linguistic Circle of New York.
Weinreich, U. (1958). Yiddish and Colonial German in Eastern Europe: The differential impact of Slavic. *American contributions to the Fourth International Congress of Slavicists*, 369–421. The Hague: Mouton.
——, (1968). *Modern English-Yiddish Yiddish-English dictionary*. New York: YIVO-McGraw-Hill.
Wexler, P. (1981). Jewish interlinguistics: facts and conceptual framework. *Language* 57: 99–149.
——, (1987). *Explorations in Judeo-Slavic linguistics*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
——, (1991). Yiddish—the fifteenth Slavic language. *International journal of the sociology of language* 91: 1–150, 215–25. Berlin-New York: Mouton-de Gruyter.
——, (1992). *The Balkan substratum of Yiddish. A reassessment of the unique Romance and Greek components*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
——, (1993a). Jewish linguistics: 1981–1991–2001. *Historical linguistics 1991. Papers from the 10th International Conference on Historical Linguistics*, ed. J. van Marle, 343–361. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamin.
——, (1993b). *The Ashkenazic Jews. A Slavo-Turkic people in search of a Jewish identity.* Columbus, Ohio: Slavica.
——, (1996). *The non-Jewish origins of the Sephardic Jews*. Albany: State University of New York.
——, (2000). Što mohuc' idyš, sučasny iwryt, èsperanta a taksama serbalužyčane, palešuki i xazary skazac' pra paxodžanne habrèjaw-aškenazi? *Arche* 3: 117–26. Minsk.
——, (2002). *Two-tiered relexification in Yiddish: the Jews, the Sorbs, the Khazars and the Kiev-Polessian dialect*. Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
——, [ms.] *An etymological dictionary of the Yiddish language. (Motivating component choice in relexified Sorbian and Kiev-Polessian).*
Zajączkowski, A. (1947). *Ze studiów nad zagadnieniem chazarskim*. Kraków: Polska Akademia Nauk. Prace Komisji Orientalistycznej.

THE KHAZARS AND BYZANTIUM—THE FIRST ENCOUNTER

Constantine Zuckerman*

The Byzantine Empire and the Khazar Kaghanate share about three hundred years of common history. The links between the two states were initially very close. The emperor Justinian II married, ca. 700, a sister or, according to a different tradition, a daughter of a Khazar kaghan. In 732/3, the emperor Leo III betrothed his son, the future emperor Constantine V, to another Khazar princess. The offspring of this marriage, Leo IV nicknamed the Khazar, ruled Byzantium in 775–780.[1] The military collaboration culminated, in 840–841, in the construction of the great Khazar fortress of Sarkel on the Don under the guidance of Byzantine engineers and craftsmen.[2] All these features are quite exceptional. Byzantine emperors were in no habit of marrying foreign princesses or of putting the Empire's engineering skills at the service of a far-away foreign power. This idyllic relationship contrasts sharply with the picture projected ca. 952—fifteen years before the Kaghanate's collapse—by the Byzantine diplomatic manual *De administrando imperio*. There, Khazaria is perceived as a dangerous enemy and several peoples are named as potential allies, capable of fighting it on the Empire's instigation. Likewise, a contemporary Khazar source, the anonymous Letter from the Genizah of Cairo, depicts Byzantium as enticing neighboring peoples to attack Khazaria.

---

* This paper was submitted to the organizers of the Khazar Symposium in the fall of 2000, reviewed and resubmitted after minor editing in the fall of 2001. It has circulated with my approval (as the publication was announced as imminent) and was translated in Russian: Hazarija i Vizantija: pervye kontakty, *Materialy po arxeologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii*, 8, Simferopol 2001, pp. 312–333. The text is printed here as submitted in 2001, with only a few bibliographical updates added in square brackets in the notes.

[1] For references and background, see Th. S. Noonan, "Byzantium and the Khazars: A Special Relationship?", in J. Shepard & S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy*, London 1992, pp. 109–132, and J. Howard-Johnston, "Byzantine Sources for Khazar History," in this volume.

[2] See, on the fortress, S.A. Pletneva, *Sarkel i "šelkovyj put'"*, Voronež 1996, and, on the date and the political context of the project, C. Zuckerman, "Two Notes on the Early History of the *thema* of Cherson," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 21, 1997, pp. 210–222, tr. in Russian: "K voprosu o rannej istorii femy Xersona, *Baxčisarajskij istoriko-arxeologičeskij sbornik*, 1, Simferopol 1997, pp. 312–323.

The watershed in the relations between the two countries is clearly marked. Judaism was adopted as the state religion of Khazaria very soon after the failed mission of Constantine the Philosopher, the future apostle to the Slavs, to the kaghan's court in 861.[3] This act, though never mentioned in any Byzantine source, was perceived by the Byzantines as a slap in the face and, of course, as a theological challenge. No later than 872, the emperor Basil I launched a vast campaign aimed at converting the Jews of his realm to Christianity, preferably by conviction, eventually by force. This campaign lingered for a while, was suspended by Basil's son, Leo VI, and then rekindled, in an emphatically anti-Khazar context, by the emperor Romanus Lecapenus towards 930. There was, doubtless, more than one factor that drove the former allies apart. The Hungarian tribes invaded the Pontic steppe in the late 830s and weakened the Kaghanate considerably, depriving it of its western part. The Hungarian factor, largely overlooked by the scholars, had a major impact on the inner development of the Khazar State, undermining the kaghan's power and prompting the creation of a parallel dynasty of kings by the kaghan's deputy, the bek.[4] More importantly in the present context, the Hungarian occupation of the steppe north of the Black Sea drove a wedge between Khazaria and Byzantium and reduced the former's value as ally. Yet, this spatial separation would justify a downgrading in relations, not the extreme animosity to which attest both the *De administrando imperio* and the Genizah Letter. There is no reason, therefore, to contest the Letter's claim that Byzantium's sudden hostility towards Khazaria was due to the latter's conversion to Judaism.

While keeping this general framework of byzantino-khazar relations in mind, I will only touch in this paper on their earliest stage, well before they were clouded by religious discord. When did Byzantines and Khazars first meet? This question goes far beyond the Byzantine context. It

---

[3] On the circumstances and the political consequences of the Khazars' conversion, see C. Zuckerman, "On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus Oleg and Igor. A Study of the Anonymous Khazar *Letter* from the Genizah of Cairo," *Revue des études byzantines* 53, 1995, pp. 237–270; cf. now J. Shepard, "The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism and Byzantium's Northern Policy," *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 31, 1998, pp. 11–34.

[4] See C. Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois au pays de Lebedia: Une nouvelle puissance aux confins de Byzance et de la Khazarie ca 836–889," in TO EMPOLEMO BUZANTIO/ *Byzantium at War (9th–12th c.)*, Athens 1997, pp. 51–74; tr. in Russian, with an appendix: "Vengry v strane Levedii. Novaja deržava na granicax Vizantii i Xazarii ok. 836–889 gg.," *Materialy po arxeologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii* 6, Simferopol 1998, pp. 659–684.

bears on the localization of the Khazars' mysterious country of origin, Barsilia, and on the date and the circumstances of their first appearance in the area north-west of the Caspian Sea, the core of their future realm. I will argue that the Khazars arrived in the region later than is generally believed, and then soon discovered their common interests with Byzantium.

* * *

The search for early evidence on Khazars used to start with anachronistic references in the eighth-century *History of Armenia* by Movses Xorenac'i—which feature the Khazars in Transcaucasia in the first centuries of the common era—and with attempts, mostly abandoned nowadays, to link the Khazars with the Akatziroi, rebellious subjects of Attila in Priscus of Panion.[5]

The Syriac adaptation of the Greek *Church History* by Bishop Zachariah of Mitylene may put us on a more solid ground. This text, produced in 569, contains an ethnographic appendix which carries the date of 555. Based on Ptolemy, it is expanded, among other things, with a list of thirteen peoples "living in tents" north of the Caucasus which includes the *ksr* (Kasar).[6] Most scholars consider this to be a reference to Khazars.[7] But to infer from this passage—as some scholars do—that its author situates the Khazars in the Northern Caucasus is clearly unwarranted. "Beyond" the thirteen peoples living in tents, he places "the tribe of the pigmies and of the dog-men, and north-west of them the Amazons". The legendary tribes, borrowed from Ptolemy, live on the limits of the known land, and their position shows that the thirteen peoples fill the entire space of Ptolemy's Asian Sarmatia, from the Caucasus ridge to the sources of the Kama. This localization of the Khazars does not necessarily bring them any closer to Byzantium.

As of the middle or the last third of the sixth century, the Khazars appear in the descriptions of raids on Persia and Byzantium by nomadic

---

[5] References and discussion in D.M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton 1954, pp. 6–7; outright dismissal in M.I. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, Leningrad 1962, pp. 55–56 (after J. Marquart).

[6] *The Syriac Chronicle known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene*, tr. F.J. Hamilton & E.W. Brooks, London 1899, p. 328.

[7] See, notably, L. Bazin, "Pour une nouvelle hypothèse sur l'origine des Khazars," *Materialia turcica* 7/8, 1981–1982, pp. 51–71, who infers from this passage on the Khazars' origin. P.B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, Wiesbaden 1992, pp. 97, 233–234, is more reserved.

tribes. These descriptions, however, are very late. They belong to Arab historians of the ninth-eleventh centuries, and although they ultimately go back to a Persian tradition, they cannot be used to define the ethnic identity of the invaders. When the same raids are described by sources, Byzantine or Armenian, more or less contemporary with the events, the Khazars are never mentioned. After a thorough scrutiny of the Arabic sources, D. Ludwig believed that he had found reliable evidence in the *Book of Deeds* of the Shah Khusro I (531–579), supposedly an official Persian document preserved more or less intact, in an Arabic translation, in the eleventh-century chronicle of Ibn Miskawayh.[8] This appreciation of Ibn Miskawayh's source, which goes back to M. Grignaschi,[9] has been recently contested, however, by Z. Rubin, who describes it as a "literary composition" of undetermined date and of "loose and inaccurate" terminology.[10] Rubin studies the data of Miskawayh's source on the tax reform of Khusro I, but his characterization applies just as well to its description of the "Khazar kaghan" as the chief of the Turks.

No wonder, therefore, that A.P. Novosel'cev, the last to address the issue, insists on the contradictions and the unreliability of evidence on the Khazar participation in the sixth-century Turkic raids. Following M.I. Artamonov, he associates the Khazars with the Sabirs, or Sabir Huns, who appear in the sixth century sources either as allies or as enemies of Byzantium in Transcaucasia. Later genealogies of Turkic peoples list Sabirs and Khazars as brothers, sons of Togarma, and so Novosel'cev hypothesizes that the Khazars were part of the Sabir tribal confederation and only gained prominence, and visibility in the sources, as the confederation collapsed in the late sixth century.[11] The Togarma of the medieval genealogies, however, had ten sons, and this would allow for many more ethnic cocktails with Khazars as an ingredient.

The attempts to extract historical data from the patently unreliable Arabic and Persian sources are most contestable, yet they have a

---

[8] D. Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches im Licht der schriftlichen Quellen*, PhD Thesis of the University of Münster, 1982, pp. 24–67, especially 26–32.

[9] M. Grignaschi, "Quelques spécimens de la littérature sassanide conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Istanbul," *Journal asiatique* 254, 1966, pp. 1–142, see pp. 6–45.

[10] Z. Rubin, "The Reforms of Khusro Anushirwan," in Averil Cameron (ed.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, III: *States, Resources and Armies* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, I), Princeton, New Jersey 1995, pp. 227–297, see pp. 266–279 (pp. 277–278 for the quotes).

[11] A.P. Novosel'cev, *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo i ego rol' v istorii Vostočnoj Evropy i Kavkaza*, Moscow 1990, pp. 71–89, in particular p. 85.

rationale. The evidence on the Khazar presence in the Northern Caucasus culminates in the story of their alliance with the Emperor Heraclius in the late 620s. Some sources present Heraclius' allies as Turks, the early-ninth-century chronicle of Theophanes describes them as "Turks, who are called Khazars", other sources present them as Khazars. The latter include the *History of (Caucasian) Albania* by Movses Dasxuranc'i, a compilation whose chapters on the late 620s were, in all opinions, composed shortly after the events described (*infra*). This major source—which seems to reinforce the view of a gradual emergence of the Khazar power on the north-eastern outskirts of the Byzantine realm—occupies a place of choice in Khazar studies.

Movses Dasxuranc'i's identification of Heraclius' allies as Khazars is taken at face value by many scholars, but not by the better informed among them, aware of the dominant position of the Western Turkic Kaghanate in that time and area. The latter argue that the formal alliance was concluded with the chief of the Turks whose Khazar subjects, being the closest to the scene of operations, supplied the mass of the troops. This basic argument is admitted by M.I. Artamonov, A. Bombaci and D. Ludwig (to name but a few).[12] A.P. Novosel'cev argues that the Khazars, once emancipated from the Sabir sway, created a state north-east of the Caucasus ridge, only nominally dependent on the Western Turkic Kaghanate; the latter's subsequent decline allowed them to consolidate their statehood, to expand their power-base, and thus to become the major force north of the Caucasus, capable of confronting the Arabs in the 640–650s.

"The crucial importance <of the Heraclius episode> for the problem of the origin of the Khazars, i.e., the tribe that made up the Khazar realm's dynasty", has been recently re-emphasized by O. Pritsak: a scion of "the Old Turkic A-shih-na dynasty", who supposedly mingled with the Khazars in Albania, "was destined to become the progenitor of the dynasty of the Khazar qagans".[13] The prevailing view is well summarized

[12] Artamonov (cited n. 5), pp. 155–156; A. Bombaci, "Qui était Jebu Xak'an ?", *Turcica* 2, 1970, pp. 7–24, see p. 13; Ludwig (cited n. 8), pp. 348–355.

[13] O. Pritsak, "The Turcophone Peoples in the Area of the Caucasus from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century," in *Il Caucaso: cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (secoli IV–XI)* (Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 43), Spoletto 1996, pp. 223–245, see pp. 232–236. The dates assigned by the author to Heraclius' first contacts with the Turks are much too early (cf. *infra*).

by J.-P. Roux who considers the events of 626–627 as the "naissance officielle" of the Khazar people and the text which describes them, as "une belle introduction à leur histoire".[14]

In a paper published in 1995, I suggested that Heraclius' allies were Turks.[15] This view will now be supported with a detailed analysis of the relevant chapters of Movses Dasxuranc'i. The reader should be warned the the A-shih-na link of the Khazar dynasty, an old phantom of the Khazarology, will thereby lose its last claim to reality and the "official birth" of the Khazar people will be somewhat postponed.

The Two Sources of Movses Dasxuranc'i on Heraclius' Campaign

The description of Heraclius' campaign against Persia and of the invasion of Transcaucasia by his northern allies comprises seven chapters of the *History of Albania* (Book II, 9–16).[16] This vivid and often intimately informed narration of the events was obviously produced long before the late-tenth-century compilation of the *History* which most scholars attribute to Movses Dasxuranc'i. But this narration has its problems. It dates the events by regnal years of the Persian Shah Khusro II (590–628) which go from the year 38 to 36 and then back to 38, and this is only the most blatant indication of its chronological disarray. C.J.F. Dowsett believed that this was due either to a mix-up of pages in an early manuscript or to the compiler's lack of care for "presenting his sources in their true chronological order"; he proposed two alternative ways of re-arranging passages in chs. 11–12.[17] The chronological incoherence of the Heraclian chapters is glossed over by A. Akopjan (Hakobyan) who derives chs. 9–14, 16 from a Life of the Albanian Catholicus Viroy (died ca. 630), which he dates in the early 630s; ch. 15 is considered as part

---

[14] J.-P. Roux, *Histoire des Turcs*, Paris 1984 (reprint 1995), p. 78.

[15] C. Zuckerman, "La petite augusta et le Turc. Epiphania-Eudocie sur les monnaies d'Héraclius," *Revue numismatique* 150, 1995, pp. 113–126, see pp. 117–118 (the present paper replaces the one announced in n. 26); cf. *ibid.*, 152, 1997, pp. 473–478.

[16] Movses Kałankatuac'i, *Patmut'iwn Ałuanic' ašxarhi*, II, 9–16, éd. V. Arak'elyan, Erevan 1983, pp. 127–170; Movses Dasxuranci, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, tr. C.J.F. Dowsett (London Oriental Series 8), Oxford 1961, pp. 75–106; Movses Kalankatuaci, *Istorija strany Aluank*, tr. S.B. Smbatjan, Erevan 1984, pp. 74–93. For reasons explained below, the indication of place of origin, Dasxuranc'I, should be preferred to Kałankatuac'i. My translation differs occasionally from Dowsett's.

[17] Dowsett (cited n. 16), pp. XIV–XV.

of a sermon by Viroy, inserted in the text by the final editor, Movses Dasxuranc'i.[18] J. Howard-Johnston suggests that two chapters, 14 and 15, originate in a Life of Viroy and conjectures for the rest (chs. 10–13, 16) "an ultimate documentary origin." Unlike Akopjan, he admits "a certain amount of chronological confusion" in the text, created when its "two strands were (…) woven together".[19]

The actual solution is much simpler. The section on Heraclius consists of two sources which are neither mixed up nor interwoven but crudely pasted together. The first source, hereafter Source A, comprises ch. 9–11; chs. 12–16 come from Source B. The dividing line between the two sources is very apparent: the *History* abruptly drops the description of the events of Khusro's 38th year at the end of ch. 11 and switches, in ch. 12, back to the year 36. The two sources are also very different in nature.

The elaborate and precise description of Khusro's last days in ch. 12–13 must go back to Viroy who was detained for twenty-five years at Khusro's court and only liberated after his dethronement. Viroy's later dealings with the northern invaders (ch. 14) are described by a person who accompanied the catholicus on his mission; the same person could have access to—or recreate from memory—a sermon by Viroy (ch. 15) and provide a vivid description of the northerners' cruelty end eventual demise (ch. 16). Source B, rather a history of the writer's times than a Life of Viroy, was produced not before the early 640s—ch. 13 ends with a forecast of an imminent collapse of the Sasanian power and of the rise of the Ismaelites—but probably not much later.

The author of Source A lays no claim to have lived through the events described. On the contrary, he emphasizes the length of the "time that

---

[18] A. Akopjan (Hakobyan), *Albanija-Aluank v greko-latinskix i drevnearmjanskix istocnikax*, Erevan 1987, pp. 188–196. In treating chs. 9–16 as a distinct textual unit, Akopjan develops the ideas of N. Adontz, N. Akinean and K.A. Kagramanjan, whose studies were unavailable to me.

[19] J. Howard-Johnston, "Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire, 622–630," *War in History* 6, 1999, pp. 1–44, see pp. 12–13. [Cf. now J. Howard-Johnston, "Armenian Historians of Heraclius. An Examination of Aims, Sources and Working-Methods of Sebeos and MovsesDaskhurantsi", in G.J. Reinink & B. H. Stolte (eds), *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and Confrontation*, Leuven 2002, pp. 41–62, who quotes T.W. Greenwood, *A History of Armenia in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries*, Oxford PhD Thesis 2000 (*non vidi*), and also refers to the present study. Both scholars view chap. II, 9–16 as basically a single unit; for the larger context, Howard-Johnston offers a slightly revised vision of Akopjan's "History of 684" (cf. *infra*). I do not find in his analysis an alternative to the one proposed below or a reason to modify it.]

passed" that clouds his thoughts and obliges him to undertake complex chronological calculations; the attacks on Albania instigated by Heraclius are only the first among "countless" barbarian invasions which he intends to narrate (ch. 9). The author makes a bad mistake—noted by commentators—in attributing to Khusro II the foundation of the city "Greater than Antioch", actually built on the order of Khusro I for Byzantine captives in the 540s (ch. 10). Another anachronistic detail appears in his version of Khusro II's letter to the northern invaders which describes Heraclius as "vagabond and fugitive" who fled from the Persian king "to the isles of the Western Sea" (ch. 11), an obvious reminiscence of emperor Constans II's (641–668) flight to Sicily in the 660s. The account of Heraclius' Persian war is short and vague; its main interest consists in a few details—drawn, no doubt, from a local tradition—regarding the author's native village, Kałankatuk', and the neighboring country.

The difference in quality between the two sources becomes even more apparent once we recognize—something which, surprisingly enough, has not been done—that they basically tell the same story. They provide a parallel account of two invasions of the Persian Empire, and of Albania in particular, by barbarians from beyond the Caucasus. The first invasion—dated by Source A soon after Khusro's year 35 (624/5) and by Source B in the beginning of the year 37 (summer 626)—hits Albania and Azerbaijan. It ends in a rather abrupt fashion after an exchange of letters—quoted, in different versions, in both sources—between the Shah Khusro and the chief of the invading host. The second invasion, in the last (38th) year of Khusro, is more eventful. Its description differs in the two texts because one of them (Source B) was produced by an eyewitness, while the other (Source A) reflects its perception many years after the event:

- The destruction and suffering caused by the second invasion of Albania are compared by the Catholicus Viroy to the capture of Jerusalem by Titus (ch. 15, cf. chs. 14 and 16). In Source A (ch. 11), this invasion is remembered less for the loss of life and property—duly noted—than for a miraculous salvation of most of the population in the mountains, an appraisal which seems to be inspired by the fate of the author's village, Kałankatuk'.
- Source B (ch. 14) preserves the name and the title of the Persian *marzpan* (governor) of Albania, Semavšnasp, who fled the country at the approach of the invading host, and names another Persian noble,

Gadvšnasp, who stayed with the catholicus.[20] In Source A (ch. 11), the Persian governor sent by Khusro, styled "our prince" (*išxan*), goes by the name of Gayšak'.

– According to Source B, Heraclius' northern allies invaded Albania for the first time via Derbend, while on the other occasion they came by way of Iberia, i.e. through the Darial pass, began the hostilities by capturing Tbilisi and only later arrived in Albania. Source A does not describe the itinerary of the first invasion but claims that the second time the enemies came via Derbend, mildly devastated Albania and then turned their rage against Tbilisi. The testimony of Source B, as always correct, has a crucial bearing on our understanding of the last, decisive phase of Heraclius' struggle against Persia (*infra*). The reversal of the invaders' itinerary in Source A could be due to the dramatic weight of the famous scene of mockery of the besieging kings by the besieged people of Tbilisi which—variously described in Sources A and B and in later sources—becomes, in the former text, the climatic point of the entire campaign.

Regarding Source A, several more remarks are in order. It has long been noted that the coverage of the seventh century (or rather of its last three quarters) in the *History of Albania* is of much higher quality than the rest of the book. This observation prompted a number of scholars to attribute most of the *History*, essentially Books I and II, to an eighth-century author.[21] A. Akopjan has argued in a recent monograph against this view, insisting on the contribution of a late-tenth-century author, Movses Dasxuranc'i, who had used two major seventh-century sources, a "Life of Viroy" and a "History of 684" (named after the year of its presumed composition). But just as Akopjan's concept of a "Life of Viroy" did not stand up to a critical scrutiny, it can be shown that the hypothetical "History of 684" is an unhappy combination of two different sources.

The first source (II, 18–28) is entirely focused on the figure of the seventh-century Albanian prince Juanšer, whose military prowess and

[20] The manuscripts transmit the name of the governor in a variety of forms: Semavštnas, Semavèšpnas, Semavšpnaz, Semavšpnaw; it is corrected by Arak'elyan (p. 154, n. 9) in order to create a parallel to the name Gadvšnasp (pp. 157, l. 3).

[21] Among the recent protagonists of this view are F.D. Mamedova, O xronologičeskoj sisteme "Istorii alban" Movsesa Kagankatvaci, *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 35, 1973, pp. 181–186; Smbatjan (cited n. 16), pp. 13–16 (with different arguments).

astuteness in maneuvering between the great powers of the time are celebrated in the most laudatory terms. Juanšer's achievements are traced to the 33rd year of his reign, marked by an elaborately described visit to the caliph's court in Damascus. The text provides a coherent chronology, based on equations between Juanšer's regnal years and external chronological systems (reigns of Yazdgerd III and Constans II, years of the Hegira); his year 33 corresponds to 669/70. C.J.F. Dowsett qualified this text as a "public address to the prince" because of a vivid exhortation at the end of ch. 28.[22] Whether it was destined or not for an oral recital, it has every feature of a panegyric of a living ruler. It can be dated to 670.

The following chapters (II, 29–45), supposedly a continuation of the "History of 684", are very different in structure, in style and, even more so, in focus. They are centered on the abbot, later bishop, Israyel, discoverer of major relics and apostle to the Huns. Included in his story is an elaborate account of Juanšer's assassination and burial (chs. 34–35) which, rather than linking it to the preceding Eulogy, highlights a difference in approach: the prince's death is explained by his own sinful behavior and, structurally, serves as pretext for the Hunnic invasion that triggers Israyel's mission. The Eulogy of Juanšer quotes a number of documents which, only a few lines long, are all literary fabrications; Israyel's biographer copies authentic documents over whole pages. What is more, the two parts of the "History of 684" are separated by ten empty years, between Juanšer's year 33, which corresponds to 669/70, and his death in September 680.[23] Neither the change of focus nor this chronological gap in what is supposed to be a continuous historical narrative have been explained. These arguments suffice in order to reject Akopjan's reconstruction of the "History of 684". Ch. II, 18–45 comprise two textual components which need to be considered separately.

There is every reason to identify the Eulogy of Juanšer as the continuation of our Source A. Written in a high rhetorical style, chs. 9–11 and 18–28 complete each other. The terminal phase of Heraclius' Persian campaign was the occasion of Juanšer's father's rise to power and of the creation of the dynasty. Thus it provided a logical start for a panegyric of Juanšer. Some salient features of this family history explain, moreover, why a later editor chose to replace part of the Eulogy with a fragment

[22] Dowsett (cited n. 16), p. 129, n. 4.

[23] This date is defended by A.A. Akopjan, "O xronologii poslednix sobytij v 'Istorii 684 goda'", *Kavkaz i Vizantija* 6, 1988, pp. 24–36.

from a different source (Source B: chs. 12–16). The editor, who claims to have learned the story "from reliable and truthful historians", resumes it in ch. 17. It turns out that Juanšer's father, known to us by his Christian name Varaz-Grigor, was born to a noble Persian family that took over the Albanian district of Gardman after having slaughtered the local chieftains. Varaz-Grigor was baptized by Catholicus Viroy—no doubt in 628 or 629, when he realized that integration was the only way to keep his position in Albania after Persia's defeat—and became the first prince of Albania. I suspect that Varaz-Grigor is none other than Gadvšnasp of Source B, a Persian of a "leading" family who did not flee with the governor but stayed with the catholicus.[24] His road to power was cleared by a massacre of the descendants of the old Albanian royal house (attributed in the text to Varaz-Grigor's grand-father, Vardan, this action actually profited Varaz-Grigor). The Eulogy of Juanšer must have presented his father's rise to princehood in a different light, and this is precisely the part—the events of 628–637—which has been rejected and replaced, no doubt for an open bias. Identifying chs. 9–11 as the first part of the Eulogy helps to explain the upbeat tone of ch. 9, in which the author announces the eventual humiliation and demise of the "countless" barbarian invaders of Albania. For a skillful panegyrist, Albania's plight in the 620s provided a welcome contrast with its secure prosperity about half a century later, at the apogee of Juanšer's power. The Eulogy's anonymous author was a native of Kałankatuk', and his *origo*, Kałankatuac'i, has been mistakenly attributed by some medieval (as well as modern) Armenian authorities to the final editor of the *History of Albania*, Movses Dasxuranc'i. Produced in 670, the Eulogy is roughly contemporary with the *History of Armenia* by Pseudo-Sebeos (terminated in 660), in which the story of Heraclius' Persian campaigns is also based, essentially, on an oral tradition, weaving solid facts with emerging legends.

The story of Bishop Israyel is more difficult to situate. Though generally well informed about his hero, its author complains that he could find no information on the beginnings of Israyel's monastic engagement. Such a remark is typical of a saint's Life, or at least of a text written after

[24] This episode is analyzed very differently by C. Toumanoff, notably in his review of Dowsett's translation, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (of the) University of London* 25, 1962, pp. 364–366. Despite a double reference to Varaz-Grigor's baptism, in the *History of Albania* and in a Georgian source he quotes, Toumanoff prefers to consider Varaz-Grigor as a Christian, who only switched from Monophysitism to Byzantine Orthodoxy.

the death of the saintly protagonist.[25] What is more, it has long been observed that the chapters on the deposition of relics in Book I (ch. 27–30) belong to the same author who describes their subsequent discovery by Bishop Israyel in Book II. I would tend, therefore, to side with those who admit the existence of an eighth-century—probably early-eighth-century—History of Albania and consider the Story of Bishop Israyel as part of its main narrative. This History was itself a compilation, whose author integrated in his text the Eulogy of Juanšer, replacing a part of it with a fragment of a different source, Source B. This working hypothesis diminishes but does not deny the rôle of the late-tenth-century author and editor, Movses Dasxuranc'i, in shaping the text available to us today. Both the Eulogy of Juanšer and the Story of Bishop Israyel provide crucial data on the Khazars that will be commented below.

A clear separation between Sources A and B not only eliminates all chronological contradictions—born out of scholars' attempts to construct two parallel texts into a consecutive narrative—but also provides the key to the identity of the northern invaders. In ch. 11, they are identified as Khazars (*Xazirk'*) in the opening line and later called the "army of the North" (*zork' hiwsisoy*) and Huns (*Honk'*). The former ethnic description is applied by C.J.F. Dowsett to the invading army in the subsequent chapters (Source B) as well, but it is absent from the original text. Source B points out repeatedly that the invaders came from the North and also provides an exact indication of their origin which, surprisingly enough, has never been exploited. The story of the first invasion ends with the sentence: *Turkann darjaw yašxarh iwr*, translated by Dowsett: "The messenger returned to his own country". The translator admits that the meaning of the word *turkan,* unattested to in Armenian, is a matter of learned speculations.[26] But "messenger" fits poorly in the context. The text describes an exchange of letters between the leader of the invaders and the Shah Khusro that takes place in the Persian territory. It would make no sense for a messenger, carrying Khusro's response, to go back to his own country while his chief is in Persia. The problematic phrase can only describe the retreat of the invading host,

[25] This remark, at the beginning of ch. 29, collides with Akopjan's concept of the "History of 684", since in 684 Israyel was alive and active. Therefore, Akopjan (article cited n. 23), p. 30, n. 33, attributes it to Movses Dasxuranc'i. This solution is rather forced: the early stages of Israyel's ascetic endeavor could interest his hagiographer, not a tenth-century historian of Albania.

[26] *History of Albania* II, 12, ed. Arak'eljan, p. 143; tr. Dowsett, p. 88, with n. 4.

just as the parallel description in Source A resumes in one sentence the effect of Khusro's menacing letter: *…ew darjan andren ènd noyn durn* ("and <the invaders> went back through the same gate").[27]

The word *turkan* describes the invaders and it has a meaning. As pointed out by K.H. Menges, *turkan* is "the Persian plural of Turk".[28] This is what it stands for in our text. A form lacking the plural ending *k'*, and thus perceived as singular in the Armenian morphology, is followed here by a verb and a pronoun in singular (I suspect this to be a hyper-correction by an editor or scribe).[29] Thus source B, produced soon after Heraclius' Persian campaign, identifies his northern allies as Turks, the same way as do the *History of Armenia* of Pseudo-Sebeos (T'etalk'),[30] Patriarch Nicephorus' *Breviarium,* composed in the 770s,[31] the *Georgian Chronicle*[32] and the *Chronicle of Brussels*, a late but valuable source.[33] By way of contrast, Theophanes' *Chnronography*, compiled ca. 813, describes the allies as "Turks, who are called Khazars",[34] and they go by the latter name in some later sources, Greek and Oriental alike. This

[27] *History of Albania* II, 11, ed. Arak'eljan, p. 134, cf. tr. Dowsett, p. 82: "the Khazars (…) returned through the same gates", the ethnic identity of the invaders being supplied by the translator.

[28] K.H. Menges, review of Dowsett's translation, *Central Asiatic Journal* 8, 1963, pp. 54–56, see pp. 55–56 (this observation is unfortunately buried in a pile of alternative etymologies).

[29] The recent sensational discovery of a manuscript in Albanian, the official language of the Albanian church in the fifth century—see Z. Aleksidzé and J.-P. Mahé, "Découverte d'un texte albanien : une langue ancienne du Caucase retrouvée," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1997, pp. 517–532—reminds us of the possibility that a seventh-century Albanian historical treatise could be written in this language; if so, the lack of grammatical accord would have resulted from a misunderstanding of the word *turkan* by an Armenian translator.

[30] *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, I. Translation and notes by R.W. Thomson (see p. 2 = p. 65 of G.V. Abgaryan's critical edition, Erevan 1979); II. Historical commentary by J. Howard-Johnston (see p. 160), Liverpool 1999. This text, completed in 660, shows no knowledge of the Khazars.

[31] Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople, *Short History*, 12 and 18, ed. tr. C. Mango, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 13, Washington 1990, pp. 54–57, 66–67.

[32] Tr. R.W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles: The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation*, Oxford 1996, p. 233.

[33] F. Cumont, *Anecdota bruxellensia I : Chroniques byzantines du manuscrit 11376* (Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Gand, 9), Gand 1894, p. 29.

[34] Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. De Boor, I, Leipzig 1883, p. 315; tr. C. Mango and R. Scott, with the assistance of G. Greatrex, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, p. 447. The part of the text cited in this study has been translated by C. Mango.

late transformation of Turks into Khazars is a historiographic phenomenon which, obviously, bears no evidence on the Khazars' actual presence in the Northern Caucasus in the 620s. In the Eulogy of Juanšer, the invaders loose their true identity forty-odd years after the Persian war; major upheavals in the steppe in the 630–660s made it difficult for an author relying on an oral tradition to figure out which Turkic tribe had invaded his country in a not so distant past (*infra*).

Our textual analysis has implications on two related controversies: the identity of Heraclius' Turkic ally and the rôle of his troops in Heraclius' last assault on Persia.

Sources A and B both name the ally Jebu Xak'an. Source A describes him as a king (*t'agawor*) like Heraclius (ch. 11). By way of contrast, Source B explains that Jebu Xak'an was a deputy of the King of the North—also named Xak'an *tout court*—, second man in his kingdom (*yaǰord ark'ayin hiwsisoy, or er erkrord t'agaworut'eann nora*); his son, identified by his title of *Šad*, is described as a nephew of the King of the North.[35] In the subsequent narrative (ch. 14), *Šad*'s father, Jebu Xak'an, is called, nevertheless, simply king (*t'agawor*). Greek sources are equally divided. Nicephorus affirms that Heraclius met the "master" (*kyrios*) of the Turks: the Turk's projected marriage with Heraclius' daughter Eudokia, described by Nicephorus, only makes sense, in fact, if the former is the ruler of his people. Theophanes, however, explains that Heraclius' ally Ziebèl "was second in rank after the Chagan".[36] Scholars have long noted that both the *History of Albania* and Theophanes, or rather their respective sources, comment on the meaning of the title *jebu/jabghu*, which designates the kagan's deputy.

The identity of Heraclius' ally and his relation to the King of the North are much debated. The question has been exhaustively reviewed by A. Bombaci and D. Ludwig (*supra*, n. 12), who provide the useful references. I will keep to the main point. J. Marquart identified Jebu Xak'an as T'ong Yabghu Kaghan who, though independent in practice of the Eastern Turkic ruler, Hsieh-li Kaghan, ruled the Western Turks with the inferior title of *jabghu*. Logically, Ju. Kulakovskij identified the King of the North as Hsieh-li Kaghan. This scheme has been contested by scholars who identify T'ong Yabghu Kaghan as the King of the North and who

[35] *History of Albania* II, 12, ed. Arak'eljan, pp. 141–143.

[36] Nicephorus 12, ed. tr. Mango, pp. 54–55; Theophanes, ed. De Boor, p. 316, tr. Mango, p. 447.

consider Jebu Xak'an/Ziebèl, the commander of "Khazar" troops, either as a brother of T'ong Yabghu Kaghan, in charge of the westernmost part of his realm, or as a Khazar ruler. Marquart's and Kulakovskij's identifications have been defended by Bombaci. What is more, once we have shown that Source B identifies the invaders as Turks, there is no more reason to attribute Jebu Xak'an/Ziebèl any Khazar connection. However, reading two distinct sources as one weighed on Bombaci's argument and exposed it to Ludwig's criticism. In fact, each source has its logic. Source A (Eulogy of Juanšer) makes no complicated distinctions. As for Source B, its author, a close collaborator of the Catholicus Viroy, had dealt for a year (late spring 628-summer 629) with the Turks who camped in Albania; when mentioning Jebu Xak'an/T'ong Yabghu Kaghan for the first time, he explains his exact hierarchical position (ch. 12). Later, in describing Viroy's negotiations with the "prince" *šad*, he calls the latter's father simply king (never King of the North), as he was no doubt treated by Viroy. Bombaci argued that T'ong Yabghu Kaghan and his successors, in retaining the inferior title of *jabghu*, recognized the superiority of the kaghan of the Eastern Turks. In a hierarchical system defined in family terms, Hsieh-li Kaghan (King of the North) and T'ong Yabghu Kaghan (Jebu Xak'an), two distant cousins, become brothers, and the latter's son, the King's nephew. But the King of the North never appears on the scene. His shadowy authority does not inhibit Jebu Xak'an's actual freedom of action.

A proper distinction between the two sources also allows a clearer view of the decisive phase of Heraclius' Persian campaign.[37] In 624 and in the winter of 624/5, Heraclius attempted a daring sally in the Persians' rear, aiming at the heart of the rival empire. His short stay in Albania during the winter is remembered in Source A as about as destructive as the subsequent "Khazar" invasion. Successive victories over three Persian generals, Shahraplakan, Shahrvaraz and Shahen, in the late winter and the spring proved Heraclius' military talent, but his small troop was chased away nevertheless by the superior Persian army. The plan to engage the Turks as allies was born during the stay in Transcaucasia. It was, no doubt, early in 625 that Heraclius sent the Patrician Andrew as his ambassador to the North, as described in Source B (ch. 12). The

[37] The best recent study of Heraclius' campaigns belongs to Howard-Johnston (cited n. 19); cf. the relevant chapters in A.N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, I: 602–634, Amsterdam 1968.

rest of the year 625 seems to have been generally uneventful. The Persians spent it raising and training more troops, and Heraclius probably employed the spoils from the previous year to do the same.[38] The return embassy of the Turks slipped into Persian territory via Derbend, penetrated into Lazica, traveled by sea to Heraclius "royal palace"—this would not necessarily indicate Constantinople but simply the place where it found Heraclius—and then went back the same way. The negotiations of the summer 625 laid the ground for the Turkic invasion of the summer 626. There can be no doubt that Heraclius planned a junction with his new allies in the Persian territory, but it did not work out. In the summer 626, he was blocked in the northern Asia Minor. He had the satisfaction of destroying, in conjunction with his brother Theodore, a vast Persian host commanded by Shahen,[39] but then he could only watch, helpless, as the Avars and the Persian troops of Shahrvaraz gathered for what could be the final assault on Constantinople. Heraclius' failure to show up explains the abrupt end of the first Turkic invasion of Azerbaijan.

The Avar siege of Constantinople failed miserably, however, and the next year's campaign was much better prepared. Heraclius did not even try to break through the Persian lines. Instead, he embarked his people on ships and sailed to Lazica, traditionally pro-Byzantine and, in any case, not garrisoned by the Persians. The sea itinerary is indicated by Nicephorus, who fuses Heraclius' two campaigns in Transcaucasia, in 624/5 and 627/8, into one,[40] and by our Source A (ch. 10), which applies

[38] I differ on this point with Howard-Johnston (cited n. 19), pp. 16–19, who extends the active hostilities over the entire year 625. [See now C. Zuckerman, "Heraclius in 625", *Revue des études byzantines* 60, 2002, pp. 189–197.]

[39] On this episode, see Theophanes, ed. De Boor, 315, tr. Mango, pp. 446–447, and the eighth-century *Life and Miracles of Saint Theodore Tiro*, on which see C. Zuckerman, "The Reign of Constantine V in the Miracles of St. Theodore the Recruit," *Revue des études byzantines* 46, 1988, pp. 191–210, on pp. 206–208, with a correction by J. Howard-Johnston, "The siege of Constantinople in 626," in C. Mango & G. Dagron, assisted by G. Greatrex (eds.), *Constantinople and its Hinterland*, Aldershot 1995, pp. 131–142, on p. 134, n. 11 (the Heraclian episode dates from 626 and not from 622). The latter text shows that the Persians were destroyed in a coordinated action of two Byzantine armies operating in the north of Asia Minor.

[40] Nicephorus, *Breviarium* 12, ed. tr. Mango, pp. 54–55 (Heraclius takes a ship to Lazica before meeting his ally, the master of the Turks). A Georgian source, published by M. Džanašvili in 1900, provides a similar, somewhat "amplified", version of the events; it seems to depend on Nicephorus (or his source) but makes Heraclius land in Trebizond, "aux confins de la Mingrélie": M. van Esbroeck, "Une chronique de Maurice à Héraclius dans un récit des sièges de Constantinople," *Bedi Kartlisa* 34, 1976, pp. 74–96,

it, mistakenly, to the first invasion of Transcaucasia rather than to the second. This way of transporting the troops is a sure sign that Heraclius' expeditionary corps was rather small (*infra*). From Lazica the emperor proceeded to Iberia and there, under the walls of its besieged capital Tbilisi, he met the Turkic chief, Jebu-Xak'an. Source A (ch. 11) dates the second invasion of Persia by Heraclius' northern allies and the siege of Tbilisi in Khusro's year 38 (from June 627) which, as it indicates correctly, was the year of his assassination (on 29 February, 628). Source B (ch. 14) provides a parallel account of the siege of Tbilisi, indicating that it lasted for two months. Finally, Theophanes states that Heraclius, together with the Turks, invaded Persia in the month of September and that on 9 October he reached the land of Chamaetha (in the vicinity of Ganzak), where he rested his army for one week.[41] All these indications fit well together. Heraclius' troops and the Turkic host joined early in July, captured Tbilisi late in August or early in September, and then invaded Persia proper, no doubt via the corridor of Nakhichevan.

Theophanes, however, makes the surprising statement that, before the October break, "the Turks, in view of the winter and the constant attacks of the Persians, could not bear to toil together with the emperor and started, little by little, to slip away until all of them had left and returned home." Heraclius then rallied the army with a pious appeal to Christ and continued to fight the Persians on his own.[42] This appraisal of the Turks' rôle as allies reduces it, basically, to the destruction of the Christian city

---

see p. 93, cf. p. 76. The *Chronicle* of Eutychius, a tenth-century patriarch of Alexandria (*infra*, n. 45), also ends Heraclius' sea-voyage in Trebizond. This geographical indication is retained by A.A. Vasiliev, "Notes on the History of Trebizond in the Seventh Century," in *Eis mnêmên Spyridônos Lamprou*, Athens 1935, pp. 29–34, see p. 30. The version of a sea-transfer all the way to Lazica is favored by Stratos (cited n. 37), p. 198, but rejected by Howard-Johnston (cited n. 19), p. 23, who suggests that Heraclius might have traveled by sea with his personal staff, while the troops were assembled "in the coastal plain east of Trebizond which provides relatively easy access to western Georgia." However, there is every reason to doubt the existence of a land road that an army of size could take from Trebizond to Lazica, see A. Bryer & D. Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 20), Washington 1985, I, pp. 19–20. The references to Trebizond in the late sources seem to reflect nothing more than its contemporary perception as the main city of Lazica/Mingrelia.

[41] Theophanes, ed. De Boor, p. 317, tr. Mango, pp. 448–449.

[42] Theophanes, ed. De Boor, p. 317, tr. Mango, p. 448. Theophanes' statement is accepted by Howard-Johnston (cited n. 19), p. 25, to the detriment of his analysis. In preferring the version of Source A to Source B, he believes that the Turks came to Iberia from Albania and that the capture of Tbilisi, shortly before their supposed departure, was their final achievement on Heraclius' behalf (pp. 40–42).

of Tbilisi. But Theophanes' chronology of their retreat is implausible,[43] and, more importantly, it is contradicted by the data of Source B. There the Turkic invasion of Albania takes place soon after the return of the Catholicus Viroy (ch. 14), who was liberated by Kavad Shiroe late in February or early in March and probably did not regain his country before the beginning of April 628. On this schedule, the Turks must have invaded Albania in April or in May. This date dovetails with the end of the winter campaign 627/8. After having won a decisive victory over the Persian general Rahzadh on December 12, Heraclius advanced, by the early February, very close to the Persian capital, Ctesiphon, but then retreated north, across the Zagros Mountains, to the city of Ganzak in Atropatene, which he reached on March 15. It was obviously then that the Turks left Heraclius and moved at a leisurely pace, pillaging the country on their way, some 300–400 km farther to the north-east, to Albania, which—as Viroy later learned to his dismay (ch. 14)—was assigned to them as permanent quarters. As for Theophanes' error, it seems to have an easy explanation. According to a contemporary source using Heraclius' official dispatch, the *Easter Chronicle*, the emperor, by God's grace, did not encounter the dire winter conditions before his entire army was safely and comfortably bivouacked in the houses of Ganzak.[44] Theophanes probably knew—perhaps from Heraclius' previous dispatch which is now lost—that the Turks had left with the winter snows, but, confused by this very late winter (in March) and by the double stay in Ganzak (at the beginning and the end of the campaign of 627/8), he made the Turks "slip away" on eve of the first stay, before the normal winter season. This allowed him to construct the victory over Persia as an exclusive deed of Heraclius' Christian troop.

A just appraisal of the rôle of the Turks in the campaign of 627/8 is crucial for understanding not only the mechanics of Heraclius' victory but also the military situation of the Empire in general. Heraclius' sea-borne expeditionary corps, which invaded Persia via Lazica in the late summer of 627, was necessarily small. The only figure available, 5000 men, provided by the tenth-century chronicler Eutychius, carries little authority but sounds like a fair appraisal.[45] By way of contrast, the

[43] This point is well taken by Stratos (cited n. 37), pp. 207–208.

[44] *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf, I, Bonn 1832, p. 732.

[45] Tr. M. Breydy, *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios von Alexandrien*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium: Scriptores Arabici 45, Louvain 1985, p. 104. Eutychius' figure is cautiously accepted by Stratos (cited n. 37), p. 198, who then makes, however,

number of Turkic allies is put by Theophanes at 40 000.[46] The evidence of Source B makes it clear that the Turks fought with Heraclius through the winter of 627/8 and thus, by implication, that this campaign was won by the Turks. Their dominant presence explains why it was no longer Heraclius—as on the previous campaigns—who sought to avoid a frontal battle, but, on the contrary, the Persians who retreated before him. Khusro's order to Rahzadh to confront Heraclius was perceived by the Persian nobles as a suicide order and was instrumental in mustering the support for Kavad Shiroe's rebellion (*History of Albania* II, 12). The decisive rôle of the Turkic allies in the campaign of 627/8 also explains why Heraclius, once deprived of their support, attempted no military action against the Persians and agreed to a border settlement that wiped all territorial gains made under Mauricius. As for Persia, it never recovered from the military and political upheaval of 628. A Chinese chronicle, which obviously draws its information from the Turks, notes that T'ong Yabghu Kaghan devastated Persia and killed the Shah Khusro II.[47] Apart from killing the shah (which only involves a slight exaggeration), this tradition, never taken seriously by scholars, is essentially correct.

The Khazars' Appearance North-West of the Caspian: Whence?

The Khazar conquest of the wide steppe region between the Lower Volga in the East and some point between the Dniepr and the Danube in the West started in the 660s, prompting, no doubt ca. 670, the creation of the Khazar Kaghanate. This process can be closely followed in several contemporary or nearly contemporary sources: the *Armenian Geography* (in two versions), the Eulogy of Prince Juanšer and the Story of Bishop Israyel in the *History of Albania*, and the common source of Nicephorus and of Theophanes on the Bulgarian migration. These Armenian and Greek sources will be interpreted here with help of others of the same

---

Heraclius' army grow like a snowball to 20 000 (p. 205) and later to 70–80 000 men (p. 208) through the incorporation of Christian subjects of the Shah (neither the Christian support nor Stratos' figures are mentioned in the sources). Howard-Johnston (cited n. 19), p. 32, appraises Heraclius' army "between 15 000 and 25 000, which accords with the strength of expeditionary forces fielded in the reign of Justinian."

[46] Theophanes, ed. De Boor, p. 316, tr. Mango, p. 447.

[47] E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux* (Sbornik trudov Orxonskoj ekspedicii VI), Saint-Petersburg 1903, p. 171, cf. p. 52.

origin, and of some recent archaeological data. It is not my intention, however, nor am I in the least competent, to attempt to make sense of the Arabic accounts of the seventh-century conquests allegedly involving the Khazars. The traditional use of these accounts—transmitted orally for well over a century before being first put in writing—as the basis for early Khazar history has resulted, I believe, in much confusion. We shall rely instead on sources which are the closest in time to the events described.

The first source to put us in touch with real Khazars is the Description of the Earth (*Ašxarhac'oyc'*), known as the *Armenian Geography*. Ascribed in some manuscripts to Movses Xorenac'i and sometimes quoted as (Pseudo-)Movses, this text is now solidly attributed to the seventh-century Armenian scholar of encyclopedic knowledge, Anania of Širak. It is preserved in two versions, one long and one short; both are now available in an English translation by R.H. Hewsen.[48] I have argued elsewhere that the long version was composed by Anania between 660 and 665 (no doubt closer to the latter date) and that the short version, representing an abridgement and a slight revision of the text, was produced by the author himself for inclusion in his vast scholastic compendium, the *K'nnikon,* not many years later.[49] One of the rare updates in the short version is highly revealing for Khazar history.

The long version of the *Geography* features the Khazars twice. In the description of Thrace, in Europe, the author mentions the island of Piwki (Ptolemy's Peuke), in the estuary of the Danube: "On this island lives Asparhruk (Asparukh), son of Xubraat' (Kubrat), who fled from the Khazars from the mountains of the Bulgars". The son of Kubrat who "fled from the Hippic Mountains" is further mentioned in the description of Asian Sarmatia. In this description—based, as I argue elsewhere, on very recent data[50]—Asparukh's fate contrasts with that of four other

[48] R.H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of* Širak *(Ašxarhac'oyc')*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, B 77, Wiesbaden 1992. The long version was edited for the first time and translated into French by A. Soukry, *Géographie de Moïse de Corène d'après Ptolémée*, Venice 1881.

[49] C. Zuckerman, "Jerusalem as the Center of the Earth in Anania Širakac'i's *Ašxarhac'oyc'* in R.R. Ervine, M.E. Stone & N. Stone (eds), *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land*, Leuven 2002, pp. 255–274.

[50] C. Zuckerman, "À PROPOS DU LIVRE DES CÉRÉMONIES, II, 48 : I. Les destinataires des lettres impériales en Caucasie de l'Est. II. Le problème d'Azia/Asia, le pays des Ases. III. L'Albanie caucasienne au x^e^ siècle," *Travaux et Mémoires* 13, 2000, pp. 531–594, see pp. 553–554.

Bulgarian tribal groups that dwell north of Caucasus.[51] It would appear that by the early 660s, the Khazars had defeated and chased away Asparukh but not yet subdued any other Bulgarian tribe.

The description of Asian Sarmatia contains yet another mention of the Khazars, which is more consequential. It is part of a rather precise description of the Volga. The Volga's upper course goes by the name of Ira (Rha) and is formed of two sources, in which one recognizes the upper Volga and the Oka. After they unite, this river reaches the Hippic Mountains and "sends an arm" to the river Tanais that falls into the Maeotis Lake. The Rha then "turns east near the Ceraunian Mountains" (Privolžskaja Vozvyšennost'), receives the waters of two rivers coming from the east (the Kama and probably the Samara) and forms "a seventy-arm river that the Turks call At'l (Atil or Itil). In its midst is an island where the people of Baslk' takes refuge from the mighty people of Khazars and Bwšxk' who attack (them) from east and west when they come there in the winter. It is called the Black Island since it becomes black because of the multitude of the Baslk' nation, men and animals, who come there. Ptolemy calls it the Crow Island. The arms of the river At'l unite again past the island and reach the Caspian Sea, separating Sarmatia from the land of the Scythians."[52]

This description of the Volga was obviously not made with a modern map at hand, yet it is coherent and clear. The author has a good notion of the Upper Volga with its numerous tributaries that form the "seventy-arm" Atil. His perception of a link between the Upper Volga and the Don reflects the easy movement of goods between the basins of both rivers.[53] He also knows that the middle and lower course of the Volga—

---

[51] *Armenian Geography,* ed. Soukry, pp. 17 and 25–26; tr. Hewsen, pp. 48 and 55.

[52] *Armenian Geography,* ed. Soukry, p. 26. Hewsen, p. 55, translates: "In its midst is an island where the Baslk' took refuge from the Khazars and the Bwšxk' who come there from east and west during the winter. It is called the Black Island because of the numbers of the Baslk' nation, men and animals, who flock to it and make it appear black. Ptolemy calls it the Isle of Crows. The branches of the Etil unite and enter the Caspian Sea, dividing Sarmatia from the land of the Scythians."

[53] J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge*, Leipzig 1903, pp. 153–154, translates the passage and compares it with Ptolemy V, 8, 7–8, ed. C. Müller, I, 2, Paris 1901, p. 913. However, Anania's description of the Volga is very different from Ptolemy's—which he uses not directly, but in a fourth-century compilation of Pappus of Alexandria, see Hewsen (cited n. 48), pp. 28–32—because of the new information he brings in. Elements of Ptolemy's description are re-employed by Anania rather freely: thus Ptolemy's Mount Korax-Crow in the Caucasus gives the name to the Crow Island on the Middle Volga. S.T. Eremjan, Rasselenie gorskih narodov Kavkaza po Ptolemeju i

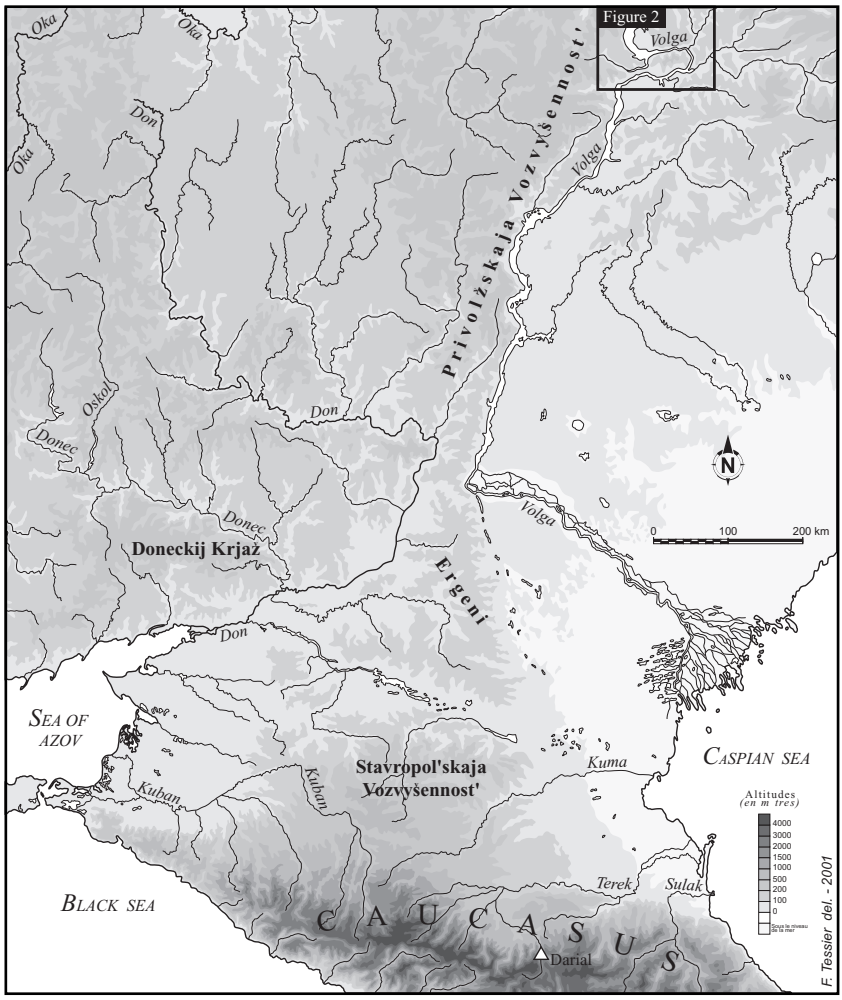


Figure 2
Volga
Oka
Oka
Don
Oka
Volga
Privolžskaja Vozvyšennost'
Oskol
Donec
Don
Donec
Doneckij Krjaž
Volga
0 100 200 km
Ergeni
Don
Sea of Azov
Kuban
Kuban
Stavropol'skaja Vozvyšennost'
Kuma
Caspian sea
Altitudes (en m tres)
4000
3000
2000
1500
1000
500
200
100
0
Terek
Sulak
Black sea
Caucasus
Darial
F. Tessier del. - 2001

General map

which separates, indeed, Sarmatia from Scythia—takes no important tributaries. It is amazing, therefore, that this very straightforward text has always been taken to mean the opposite of what it says. While the author describes a river formed of many tributaries that flows to the sea in one stream, all commentators of the passage apply it to the delta of the Volga, that is to a river that splits into many streams before flowing into the Caspian. The reason is that no one seems to be able to find a big island in the middle course of the Volga. A related problem concerns the localization of the people of Baslk'.

The people that Anania of Sirak calls Basłk'—in the short version, he also uses the form Barsilk'- is first mentioned under the name of Barselt in the context of the 550s. According to Theophylactus Simocatta, this people, along with the Ounnogours and the Sabirs, submitted to the Pseudo-Avars.[54] This reference provides a vague indication as to their place of dwelling. By far the latest mention of their country appears in the late-twelfth-century chronicle of Michael the Syrian who identifies it as Alania: "le pays d'Alân qu'on appelle Bersâlia".[55] This reference is part of a legend about the settlement of three Scythian brothers—two of them are identified as Khazar and Bulgar—in Roman territory under the emperor Mauricius. The legend has been variously rationalized by Khazarologists. As part of this process, the country of Bersalia (or Barsilia) has been detached from Alania and moved east, to the interfluvium of the Terek and the Sulak in Northern Daghestan, described by M.G. Magomedov as the "cradle of the Khazar state". Others, like D.M. Dunlop, admit, in deference to the *Armenian Geography*, that "the available notices (…) do not permit us to restrict Barsilia and the Barsilians

---

"Armjanskoj geografii" VII v., in *Trudy VII mezdunarodnogo kongressa antropologiceskih i etnograficeskih nauk*, VIII, Moscow 1970, pp. 400–409, see pp. 401–402, confuses Anania's concept of a link between the Volga and the Don through an "arm" with the notion of a "bifurcation" of the Volga which presents the Don as an arm of the Volga. Eremjan also fails to recognize that Anania situates the connecting "arm" very high upstream, above the Samara Elbow, and strives, for his part, to localize it below the modern delta of the Volga.

[54] Theophylactus Simocatta, *Historiae*, VII, 8, 3, ed. C. de Boor with additions by P. Wirth, Stuttgart 1972, p. 258; tr. Michael & Mary Whitby, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*, Oxford 1986, p. 190.

[55] Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, ed. tr. J.-B. Chabot, vol. II (of the translation), Paris 1901, p. 364. The story is copied in the late-thirteenth-century chronicle of Bar Hebraeus. The association of the Barsils and the Alans might go back to the legend, created by Movses Xorenac'i II, 52 and set in the early second century, on a marriage between Alan and Basilk' settlers in Armenia, see Moses Khorenats'i, *History of Armenia*, tr. R.W. Thomson, Cambridge Mass.- London, 1978, p. 200.

to a small territory at the east end of the Caucasus" and devise, like A.P. Novoseľcev, a mega-Barsilia embracing a considerable territory in the central and the eastern part of the Northern Caucasus as well as the Lower Volga.[56] This is, however, a faulty reasoning based on very poor evidence. Coherent geographical data localize Barsilia well over a 1000 km away from Alania.

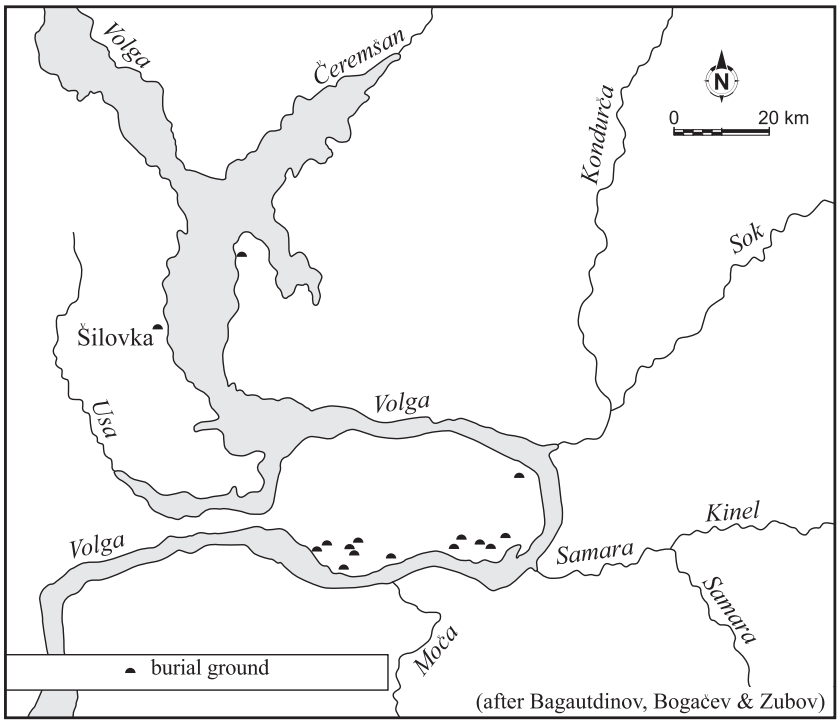
The *Armenian Geography* names, as neighbors and enemies of the Baslk', "the mighty people of Khazars and Bwšxk' (i.e. B[o]wšxk'=Bušxk')." The same people of Bušxk' is listed in the entry on Scythia as dwellers of Scythia, east of the At'l-Volga. The Bušxk' have been identified by M.I. Artamonov as Bashkirs,[57] well situated by the ninth-tenth-century Oriental sources—in particular by Ibn Faḍlân who visited them in 922—north-east of the Volga's Samara Elbow (Samarskaja Luka), on the lower Kama.[58] This localization of the Bashkirs makes it difficult to situate their neighbors, the Baslk', on the Lower Volga. R.H. Hewsen rejects, therefore, Artamonov's identification for the Bušxk' in the entry on Asian Sarmatia, without proposing an alternative identity. Nevertheless, he identifies the same Bušxk' in the Scythian entry as the Volga Bulgars, the Bashkirs' western neighbors who do not appear in the region, in fact, before the eighth century.[59] Thus he stretches the people of Bušxk' along the entire Middle and Lower Volga. What is more, Arab geographers based on the late-ninth-century *Anonymous Relation*, notably Ibn Rusta (ca. 920) and Gardizi, name Barṣûlâ as one of the three clans of

[56] M.G. Magomedov, Dagestan i strana Bersilija, in *Rannie bolgary v Vostocnoj Evrope*, Kazan' 1989, pp. 24–34 (with a bibliography), cf. V. Minorskij, *Istorija Širvana i Derbenda X–XI vekov*, Moscow 1963 (a revised translation of V. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvan and Darband in the 10th–11th Centuries*, Cambridge 1958), pp. 127–129; Artamonov (cited n. 5), pp. 130–132; Dunlop (cited n. 5), p. 44; Novoseľcev (cited n. 11), p. 79.

[57] Artamonov (cited n. 5), pp. 234–235.

[58] See A.P. Kovalevskij, *Kniga Axmeda ibn Fadlana o ego putešestvii na Volgu v 921–922 g.,* Kharkiv 1956, 130–131, with the translator's notes. A. Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe in the Early Middle Ages. An Introduction to Early Hungarian History*, Budapest 1999, p. 291, cites Ibn Faḍlân in support of his claim that "the area inhabited by the Bashkirs in 922 can be firmly delineated (…) between the River Ural and the River Kundurcha." However, only after crossing the latter river (moving from the Ural to the north), did Ibn Faḍlân reach Bashkir country. The Bashkir raids could reach, according to this author, as far south as the Cagan (slightly north of the Ural), but this people dwelled much farther to the North.

[59] Hewsen (cited n. 48), pp. 114–115 (n. 49) and p. 236, cf. p. 246 (n. 77A) (citing J. Marquart).



Samarskaja Luka/Samara Elbow

the Volga Bulgars.[60] Barṣûlâ, in which all scholars recognize Barsilia, is thus situated north of the Samara Elbow. Citing this evidence, Hewsen opts for P. Golden's solution, according to which the Barsils have "split in two groups perhaps in connection with the formation of the Khazar state or due to the Arab-Khazar wars."[61] But is it really worth it to stretch the Bušxk'/Bashkirs and to split the Barsils just in order to accommodate, in a very partial way, for a stray indication of Michael the Syrian?

Both the *Armenian Geography* and the Arab geographers are very explicit, in fact, in situating the Baslk'/Barsilk'/Barṣûlâ on the Middle

[60] Ibn Rusta (Ibn Rusteh), *Les atours précieux*, tr. G. Wiet, Cairo 1955, p. 159; A.F. Martinez, Gardizi's Two Chapters on the Turks, *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2, 1982, pp. 109–217, see pp. 157–158.

[61] Hewsen (cited n. 48), p. 114 (n. 47), citing a private communication by Golden. Golden (cited n. 7), p. 254, identifies the brṣûlâ on the Middle Volga of the Arab geographers as Barsul/Barčul, Berzilia, Bersilia, etc. "of the Byzantine, Islamic and Armenian sources, the land and people, in the North Caucasian steppe zone associated with early Khazar history".

Volga, next to the Bashkirs. The former text specifies, moreover, that the Baslk' take refuge on a big island created by the Volga at the point where the last major tributaries flow into it to form the At'l. This is a fairly precise description of the Samara Elbow. Anania of Sirak was not working, as said, with a modern map and so his description of the Volga conveys a geographic reality that all but the most detailed maps dissimulate. Most of the maps present the Samara Elbow as an open arch. They omit the small river of Usa which flows into the Volga and transforms the Elbow into practically an island, well over 200 km in perimeter, attached to the mainland, in the North-West, by an isthmus only 2 km wide. The position of the Samara Elbow, the refuge of the Baslk', indicates the true location of Barsilia.

The new localization of Barsilia, about 1,000 km to the north from its traditional site, has several implications. In the first place, it provides a precise ethnic label for the population of the Samara Elbow, described in recent studies as early or proto-Bulgarian.[62] The Barselt-Barsils, neighbors of the Ounnogours, were identified as a Bulgarian tribe by W. Tomaschek,[63] and this identification can now be confirmed by archaeology. The archaeologists who study the seventh-century population of the Samara Elbow and its vicinity note, moreover, the heterogeneous character of the finds: of the cranial features of the defunct as well as of the burial goods and customs. That, for an anthropologist, the best parallel for a series of crania from the Samara Elbow is the tenth-century Hungarian material from the Central Europe,[64] is by no means surprising: these crania attest, no doubt, to the presence of the Bashkirs, very closely related to the later Hungarians. A group of burials, notably near Šilovka, north-west of the Samara Elbow, have been related by the excavators to a distinctive burial culture, best attested to east of the Dniepr and on the Sea of Azov, which they believe to be Bulgarian and define

---

[62] G.I. Matveeva, *Mogil'niki rannix bolgar na Samarskoj Luke*, Samara 1997 (Dr. I. Gavritukhin was very kind to put this rare book at my disposal); R.S. Bagautdinov, A.V. Bogačev, S.E. Zubov, *Prabolgary na Srednej Volge*, Samara 1998 (I am most grateful to Dr. Zubov for sending me a copy of this valuable publication). Both studies provide a map of the Samara Elbow; the latter indicates (p. 40) that a fortification constructed in the tenth century by the Volga Bulgars (Mezdurečenskoe gorodišče) barred the narrow isthmus that attaches the Elbow to the mainland, emphasizing its insular position.

[63] W. Tomaschek, Barselt, in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, III, 1, Stuttgart 1897, col. 28.

[64] I.R. Gazimzjanov, cited by Bagautdinov, Bogačev, Zubov (cited n. 62), p. 169; cf., more generally, *ibid.*, pp. 167–172.

as a whole as "Pereščepina-Šilovka horizon".[65] By way of contrast, A.I. Ajbabin (after B. I. Maršak) defines the same culture as Pereščepina-Voznesenka and attributes it to the early Khazars.[66] The cultural and ethnic mixture, discovered by the archaeologists in the Samara Elbow region, fits precisely the description of the *Armenian Geography*.

To appraise the implications of the new localization of Barsilia on the Khazar history, we should continue the comparison between the long and the short versions of the *Armenian Geography*. The chapter dedicated to Asian Sarmatia in the long version mentions the people of the Turks localized east of the Volga, beyond the Sabirs. It is further indicated that "the khakan is their king and khatun is their queen, the wife of the khakan". In the parallel chapter of the short, revised version, the Turks are no longer mentioned, while the Khazars are noted in the list of tribes who inhabit Asian Sarmatia, apparently as the most northern tribe. More importantly, the notice regarding the kaghan of the Turks is replaced with the following statement: "The king of the north is the khakan who is the lord of the Khazars. The queen, or khatun, the wife of the khakan, is of the Barsilk' nation". The military struggle, described in the long version, gives birth to a new ethnic alliance. What is more, the Khazar ruler bears now the supreme title of kaghan that previously belonged to the ruler of the Turks. The new elements in the short version could have been introduced as early as ca. 670. Thus the *Armenian Geography* gives us a real feel for the dynamics of the changes produced by the rise of the Khazars.

Two Byzantine chroniclers, Nicephorus the Patriarch of Constantinople and Theophanes the Confessor, provide a description of the emergence of the Khazars that goes back to a common source composed ca. 720 at the latest. According to Theophanes, whose rendering is fuller and closer to the original, "the great nation of the Khazars issued forth

---

[65] Bagautdinov, Bogačev, Zubov (cited n. 62), pp. 156–162.

[66] A.I. Ajbabin, *Etničeskaja istorija rannevizantijskogo Kryma*, Simferopol 1999, pp. 171–185, who speaks of Pereščepina-Voznesenka type finds (Ajbabin's analysis does not bear on the Middle Volga finds). By way of contrast, I.O. Gavritukhin attributes the finds of Pereščepina type and of Voznesenka type to two different successive populations and cultures, see I.O. Gavrituxin and A.M. Oblomskij, *Gaponovskij klad i ego kul'turno-istoričeskij kontekst*, Moscow 1996, pp. 89, 92 and 274, fig. 90. In this analysis, it is the Voznesenka type finds which reveal the presence of the Khazars. [See now, on this topic, the respective contributions by I. Gavrituhin (in French) and by A. Aibabin (in English) in C. Zuckerman (ed.), *La Crimée entre Byzance et le Khaganat khazar*, Paris 2006, pp. 13–30 and 31–65.]

from the inner depths of Berzilia, that is from the First Sarmatia, and conquered all the country beyond the sea as far as the Sea of Pontos; and they subjugated (…) Batbaian <the eldest son of Kubrat>, chieftain of the First Bulgaria, from whom they exact tribute to this day".[67] Thus "the great nation of the Khazars" only came into sight of the Byzantines—as of the Armenians—after it had conquered Barsilia. Most scholars admit that the creation of the Khazar Kaghanate coincided with the integration of the Barsils and took place in their country, yet in situating Barsilia west or north of the Caspian they argue for the North-Caucasian origin of the Khazar statehood. Now we see that there is as little evidence to support this reasoning as to justify the Khazar presence in the Northern Caucasus in the early seventh century (*supra*). The Khazars came from the Middle Volga and surely not alone. The rapid political accommodation with the subdued Barsils suggests that the latter were part of the Khazar horde that moved south. If so, the perennial enigma of Khazar archaeology—linked to the preponderance of "Bulgarian" material—and the mysterious reference of al-Iṣṭa<u>kh</u>rî to two kinds of Khazars, dark and bright,[68] finds a possible solution. The Khazar conquerors, who subjugated the Northern Caucasus and the Pontic steppe, comprised a strong Barsilian (Bulgarian) element. In the new country, the Barsils were no doubt regarded as Khazars.

The Khazars' appearance north-west of the Caspian: When?

As early as 555, the name of Khazars appears to have been known to the anonymous author of the geographical excursus in the Syriac adaptation of Zachariah of Mitylene's *Church History* (*supra*). If the Khazars are one of the thirteen peoples "living in tents", they must have nomadized west of the southern reaches of the Ural ridge: on the north-western outskirts of the nascent Turkic Kaghanate, on the edge of the Finno-Ugric world and on the frontier of the forest and the steppe, in the region where the close contacts between the Finno-Ugrians and the Turks will give birth to the Hungarian people. But the Khazar expansion southwards only

[67] Theophanes, ed. De Boor, p. 358, tr. Mango, p. 498; Nicephorus 35, ed. tr. Mango, pp. 88–89, cf. pp. 15–16 on the common source.

[68] Al-Iṣṭa<u>kh</u>rî's description is translated by Dunlop (cited n. 5), p. 96.

starts a century later. The combined evidence of archaeological excavations and of several contemporary texts indicates the circumstances and the chronology of their movement.

The excavators of the Samara Elbow burials date the earliest monuments to the second half of the seventh century. R.S. Bagautdinov, A.V. Bogačev and S.E. Zubov affirm that the vast majority of settlements of the region's earlier population—the Imen'kovo culture which they attribute to the Slavs—disappears, ca. 600, under the pressure of the "proto-Bulgars", whose advancement to the Middle Volga they plausibly relate to the creation of a powerful confederation of Bulgarian tribes under the Khan Kubrat. This analysis creates a gap of half a century between two successive populations which is contested by G.I. Matveeva, who believes in the survival of the Imen'kovo culture well into the seventh century.[69] The migration of the "proto-Bulgars"—whom I identify as Barsils—probably took place in the 640–650s, at the apogee of Kubrat's power. By ca. 660 at the latest, this attempted expansion brought the Bulgarian tribes into collision with the Bashkirs and the Khazars.

While the Barsils were subjugated and eventually absorbed by the Khazars, this could be only partly the case of a much stronger part of the Bulgarian horde led by Kubrat's son, Asparukh. According to the long version of the *Armenian Geography*, Asparukh was defeated by the Khazars and fled from the Hippic Mountains to an "island" in the delta of the Danube (*supra*). Two main identifications for the Hippic Mountains have been proposed. M.I. Artamonov attaches this name to the low ridge of Ergeni and to the Stavropol' Hights, north of the Kuban plain where he situates the center of Kubrat's Bulgaria. By way of contrast, V.F. Gening argues for a more western location of the site, identifying it as the Doneckij Krjaž[70] The latter view is more compatible with the well-informed description of Anania of Širak, who mentions the Hippic Mountains before—that is, to the west of—the Ceraunian Mountains which make the Volga turn to the East. "Close to the Hippic Mountains"

[69] Bagautdinov, Bogačev, Zubov (cited n. 62), pp. 167–170; Matveeva (cited n. 62), pp. 88–89.

[70] Artamonov (cited n. 5), p. 172 (the Ergeni identification of the Hippic Mountains in Ptolemy has a long history—see Müller, cited n. 53, p. 913); V.F. Gening, A.H. Halikov, *Rannie bolgary na Volge*, Moscow 1964, pp. 111–112. Nicephorus and Theophanes (*supra*, n. 67) mention Asparukh's settlement in the region of Onglos, north of the Danube (Anania's island of Piwki), but not the place he came from or his defeat by the Khazars.

flows the "arm" that links the Volga to the Don; the sources of the five rivers that flow into the Maeotic Lake are localized in the Hippic Mountains. It would probably be better, in fact, not to restrict Anania's Hippic Mountains to the Doneckij Krjaž, but rather consider them as part of the low plateau south-west of the Privolžskaja Vozvyšennosť, including the Belogor'e Heights near Voronež pierced by the tributaries of the Don. Asparukh would have advanced rather far to the north, where he was checked and defeated by the Khazars. The Barsils' settlement in the Samara Elbow region would appear, in this analysis, not as an isolated breakthrough, but as part of a larger expansion of the Bulgarian tribes northwards. This movement was perceived by the Khazars as an aggression and a threat. The victory over Asparukh, commonly viewed as the first stage of the Khazar assault on the Bulgarian confederation, was essentially a defensive action. However, it did show the Khazars the way of a potential expansion and, to that extent, triggered their victorious southern campaign.

Asparukh was defeated by the Khazars shortly before the composition of the original, long version of the *Armenian Geography* (between 660 and ca. 665),[71] which still seems to view the Khazars as a far-away military power. By way of contrast, the Eulogy of Juanšer notes a Khazar invasion in Transcaucasia two years after the visit to the region of the Emperor Constans II in his 19th year (659/660), that is in 662. The Albanian prince defeats the invaders single-handedly and expels them beyond the Caucasus. To evaluate this information, we should review systematically the references of the Eulogy, as reconstructed above, to the northern tribes.

It should first be reminded that Heraclius' allies are described, indiscriminately, as Khazars and Huns (*supra*). The mix up is surprising because, in seventh-century Albania, the name of the Huns applied not to distant fifth-century invaders but to close and well-known neighbors

[71] Since, according to the common source of Nicephorus and Theophanes, the Khazars fought Asparukh after his father's death, the year of his defeat would have to be set somewhat later if one accepts the argument for Kubrat's death ca. 665, see recently I. Božilov, H. Dimitrov, Protobulgarica (zametki po istorii protobolgar do serediny IX v.), *Byzantinobulgarica* 9, 1995, pp. 7–61, on pp. 32–33; cf. Golden (cited n. 7), p. 245. According to Theophanes, Kubrat died in the days of "Constantine the Western", better known as Constans II (641–668), who spent his last years (663–668) in the West; this is taken to indicate that Kubrat died during Constantine's stay in the West. But this interpretation is patently forced. In qualifying Constantine as "the Western", the author simply wants to distinguish him from his homonymous son.

dwelling north of Derbend.[72] Further, the Eulogy claims (II, 22) that, ca. 660, Juanšer's fame reached so wide that even the King of Turkestan—the kaghan in the *Armenian Geography*—expected from him tokens of love and peace. That Juanšer's fame could reach the kaghan is doubtful, if only because, according to Chinese sources, the Western Turkic Kaghanate was finally destroyed by the Chinese in 659 after years of decline.[73] The next chapter (II, 23) describes the aborted Khazar invasion of 662. In ch. II, 26, the King of the Huns invades Albania in 665 and Juanšer goes to meet him without fear, although no king of Persia "had ever been able to behold the King of Turkestan in person." Impressed by this encounter, the King of Huns reconciles with Juanšer and gives his daughter in marriage to Juanšer or to his eldest son.[74] The caliph's esteem for the Albanian prince grows then considerably, since he knows that this matrimonial link allows Juanšer to unleash at any moment the tribes of Turkestan (II, 27).

The demise of the Turkic Kaghanate during the early years of Juanšer's reign explains the ethno-political amalgam in the Eulogy. The ruler of the North-Caucasian Huns, once a modest subject of the kaghan, must have gained independence and, to enhance the glory of his in-law, Juanšer, he is assimilated by the panegyrist to the King of Turkestan. The Huns' association with the Khazars is part of this tribal amalgam. Writing in 670, about the time Anania of Širak revises his *Geography*, the author of the Eulogy knows of a mighty tribe that is now the master of Turkestan. Just as in the description of Heraclius' campaign, the Khazars=Huns replaced the Turks, the Khazars, I suspect, may have replaced the Huns in 662. The loose ethnic nomenclature of the panegyrist is hardly a solid base for ascribing to the Khazars a minor invasion that could be easily fought off by Juanšer alone. The importance of the Eulogy is rather in its testimony that, by 670, the Khazars were known and held in awe in Transcaucasia.

The Story of Bishop Israyel which, as suggested above, is part of an early-eighth-century History of Albania, puts us on a more solid ground. There, the anonymous "king" of Huns of the Eulogy, related by marriage to Juanšer, has a name, Alp'-ilit'uer (ch. 36), and it is explained that ilit'uer (better *eltebär*) is actually a title, which he earned for the

[72] See Golden (cited n. 7), pp. 106–108.
[73] See Golden (cited n. 7), p. 136.
[74] The manuscripts diverge on the latter point, see Akopjan (cited n. 18), p. 200.

many feats of bravery performed in Turkestan with the Khazar kaghan (ch. 41). In this text, the ruler of the Huns is never styled a king—which implies sovereignty—but a great prince of his people. These indications relate to the events of ca. 682–684 when, after Juanšer assassination, the Huns first invade Albania to avenge his death and then let themselves be baptized by an Albanian bishop, Israyel. The text confirms the image of the Khazars as the new masters of Turkestan and thus as the successors of the Turkic Kaghanate. More importantly, the text indicates that by the early 680s, the Khazar Empire with its hierarchy of subordinated tribes is in place, reaching to the Caucasus ridge and to the limits of Albania in the east. In the west, a *follis* struck between 654 and 659 gives a terminus post quem for the fire that marks the Khazar conquest of the city of Bosporus.[75]

In 685, the Khazars invaded Transcaucasia, no doubt for the first time. This invasion is described in a number of sources, notably in a short Armenian Chronicle composed in the second year of Justinian II (686/7); once ascribed to Anania of Širak, it has been recently attributed to Pilon (Philo) of Tirak.[76] The same invasion had probably inspired the description, in the *History of Armenia* by Movses Xorenac'i, of the "hosts of the northern people united, Khazars and Basilk'," who invade Transcaucasia through the pass of Derbend.[77] The Chronicle of 686/7 notes the smashing defeat of the Armenian, Georgian and Albanian armies by the Khazars in August 685. More importantly, the text makes it clear that

[75] See Ajbabin (cited n. 66), pp. 185–187, cf. Idem, "Xazarskij sloj v Kerči," *Materialy po arxeologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii* 7, 2000, pp. 168–185, see pp. 168–169. Ajbabin relates the fire to a presumed Khazar raid of 679–680—a date derived from Nicephorus and Theophanes—which provoked the flight of Asparukh and a major devastation in the Northern Pontus. In Theophanes, however, AM 6171 (678/9) is the approximate date of the Bulgarian migration across the Danube into Byzantine territory; there is no indication as to the date of their clash with the Khazars which provoked their initial installation north of the Danube.

[76] The text is re-edited in Anania's Works: Anania Širakac'i, *Matenagrut'yun*, ed. A.G. Abrahamyan, Erevan 1944, see p. 399 for the passage discussed; attributed to Pilon by H. Bart'ikyan, Anania Širakac'un veragrvol "Žamanakagrut'yan" ew nra banak'ali harc'i šurǰè, *Banber Matedarani* 8, 1967, pp. 55–77.

[77] Movses Xorenac'i II, 65, tr. Thomson, p. 211 (to the extent that the events described by Movses can be related to Roman chronology, the invasion is set in the late second century). The association of the Khazars and the Barsils might be an independant recollection of the late-seventh-century historical reality, but it may also be due to the author's acquaintance with the *Armenian Geography*, shown to be one of his sources (see Thomson's introduction, pp. 51–52, cf. pp. 56–61 on the eighth-century date of the *History*).

this attack was not directed against the Arabs and did them no harm: three years earlier, in fact, the Christian nations of Transcaucasia had stopped paying taxes to the Arabs who, in any case, did not maintain an army in the area.[78] A year after the Khazar raid, in the late summer 686, Justinian II sent an army under the *strategos* Leontius that subjugated Armenia, Iberia, Albania, Boukania (i.e. Moukania=Mukan) and Media, the latter two localities corresponding to Azerbaijan.[79] Byzantium's eastern adventure, which involved a visit to Armenia by Justinian II in person, in 688, lasted until the Byzantine defeat by the Arabs near Sebastopolis/Sulusaray in 692. There is no way to deny that the Byzantines profited greatly, and promptly, from the Khazar invasion in order to take over a region, whose inhabitants would not have submitted to them if they were in a state to resist. This is not a proof that the Khazar and the Byzantine military expeditions were coordinated beforehand, but this was surely enough to show to Justinian II the potential profit of a future alliance.

* * *

The Byzantino-Khazar collaboration begins very soon after the Khazars appear in the Northern Caucasus and the Pontic steppe. It takes various and often peculiar forms. The most striking case is Crimea, which the Khazars penetrate in the last third of the seventh century. While they are the only military power in the region, they do not expel the Byzantine administration from Cherson, the empire's traditional northern stronghold. After his overthrow in 695, Justinian II is exiled to Cherson. Ca. 710, when relations are strained, we find a Khazar governor (*tudun*) in Cherson, but soon afterwards the city peacefully returns to Byzantine authority.[80] At the same time, a new city emerges, Sougdaia, modern

[78] This point sometimes escapes well informed scholars, notably J. Laurent and M. Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886*, Lisbonne 1980, p. 127.

[79] Theophanes, ed. De Boor, p. 363, tr. Mango, p. 507; cf. Zuckerman (cited n. 50), p. 536. Theophanes dates Leontius' campaign in the year of creation 6178 (1 September 685–31 August 686), but the Chronicle composed in the second year of Justinian II (10 July 686–9 July 687) knows nothing of it. The dates we retain imply that the Chronicle—which mentions no other event after the Khazar invasion—was composed very early in Justinian II's second year. J.F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, Cambridge 1990, p. 71, dates Leontius' expedition in 688/9, confusing it, no doubt, with the subsequent visit to the region of Justinian II in person.

[80] On the Byzantino-Khazar condominium in Crimea, see A.A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in Crimea* (Monographs of the Medieval Academy in America 11), Cambridge Mass. 1936, pp. 81–87.

Sudak, on the eastern shore of Crimea. A.I. Ajbabin considers it, with good reasons, as a late-seventh-century Khazar foundation.[81] The city's early prominence is attested to by recent finds of Byzantine seals, probably originating from a collapsed customs house, the earliest dating from 696–697.[82] Manifestly, the city functions from the start as a trade point with Byzantium.

Unsurprisingly, the Khazars are very closely involved in the Byzantine internal politics of the period. Ca. 700, they provide a refuge and a wife to Justinian II. When the latter switches his alliance to the Bulgarians, the Khazars sponsor the revolt of Bardanes Philippicus who, in 711, assassinates Justinian II. The son of Leo III, Constantine, marries a Khazar princess in 732/3; this happy event coincides with a massive Khazar invasion of Transcaucasia which destabilizes the Arabs and allows the Byzantines to recover some of their possessions in the area. If one discards Justinian II's marriage in exile, this is the first foreign dynastic marriage in Byzantine history.

For a century and a half, Byzantium had no closer ally than Khazaria. The friendship was nourished by sharing common enemies: the Arabs, who confronted the Khazars at Derbend, and the Bulgarians in Thrace, who did not forget Asparukh's defeat and, as late as 894, singled out the captives from an elite Khazar regiment in Byzantine service by cutting off their noses.[83] Then, this special relationship broke down and was transformed into an intense hatred. This hatred was entirely due to the Khazars' religious choice. Who would ever dare to claim that the religion can be separate from politics?

---

[81] Ajbabin (cited n. 66), p. 194.

[82] See V. Sandrovskaja, Die neuen Funde an byzantinischen Bleisiegeln auf dem Krim, *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 4, 1995, pp. 153–161, see pp. 153–155; cf. most recently, E. Stepanova, New Seals from Sudak, *ibid.*, 6, 1999, pp. 47–58.

[83] Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1838, p. 358.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources, editions, commentaries, sources studies

Collections

Göckenjan, H. and I. Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte über die Völker Osteuropas und Zentralasiens im Mittelalter. Die Ǧayhânî-Tradition*, Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica, Bd. 54 (Wiesbaden, 2001).

Kalinina T.M., *Svedenija rannix učënyx Arabskogo Xalifata* (*Drevnejšie istočniki po istorii narodov SSSR*). Teksty, perevod, kommentarii. (Moscow, 1988).

F. Kupfer, T. Lewicki, *Źródła hebrajskie do dziejów Słowian i niektórych innych ludów Środkowej i Wschodniej Europy* (Wrocław-Warszawa, 1956).

Lewicki T., *Źródła arabskie do dziejów Słowiańszczyzny.* (Wrocław-Kraków-Warszawa, 1956–1988), 4 vols.

Pigulevskaja, N.V., *Sirijskie istočniki po istorii narodov SSSR* (Moskva-Leningrad 1941).

Zaxoder, B.N., *Kaspijskij svod svedenij o Vostočnoj Evrope* (Mosvka, 1962, 1967), 2 vols.

Zimonyi, I. (2005), *Muszlim források a honfoglalás előtti magyarokról. A Ǧayhānī-hagyomány magyar fejezete* (Budapest, 2005).

Arabic

Al-Balâḏurî, Abû'l-ʿAbbâs Aḥmad, *Kitâb Futuḥ al-Buldân* ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1895); ed. R.M. Raḍwân (Cairo, 1959).

Al-Balxî (Balḫî), Abû Zayd Aḥmad b. Sahl (= Muṭahhar b. Ṭâhir al-Muqaddasî), *Kitâb al-Bad waʾt-Taʾrîḫ*, ed. Ch. Huart (Paris, 1899–1916), 6 vols.

Al-Bîrûnî, Abû Rayḥân Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *Al-Aṯâr al-baqiyya ʿan qurûn al-ḫâliyya*, ed. C.E. Sachau (Leipzig, 1878, reprint: 1923 and Baghdad, n. d).

Ibn Aʿṯam al-Kûfî, Abu Muḥammad Aḥmad, *Kitâb al-Futûḥ* ed. M. Khân and M. al-ʿAbbâsî (Hyderabad, 1968–1975), 8 vols., see also *Al- Futûḥ*, ed. S. Zakkâr (Beirut, 1412/1992), 3 vols.

Ibn al-Aṯîr, ʿIzz ad-Dîn, *Al-Kâmil fiʾ-t-Taʾrîx. Chronicon quod perfectissimum inscribitur*, ed. C.J. Tornberg (Leiden, 1851–1875, reprint: Beirut, 1965–1966, with differing pagination), 12 vols.

Ibn Faḍlân, *Risâla*, ed. S. Dahhân (Damascus, 1960), A.Z.V. Togan (ed., Germ. trans. commentary), *Ibn Faḍlâns Reisebericht* in *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes,* XXIV/3 (Berlin, 1939), A.P. Kovalevskij, *Kniga Axmeda ibn Fadlana o ego putešestvii na Volgu v 921–922 gg.* (Xar'kov, 1956), facsimile edition of Mašhad ms. with Russ. trans.

Ibn al-Faqîh al-Hamaḏânî, *Kitâb al-Buldân*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1885) [BGA, V].

Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitâb al-Masâlik waʾl-Mamâlik*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1873) [BGA, II], second ed.: *Kitâb Ṣûrat al-Arḍ. Opus geographicum auctore Ibn Hauḳal secundum textum et imagines codicis constantinopolitani conservatii in Bibliotheca Antiqui Palatii No. 3346 cui titulus est "Liber imagines terrae,"* ed. J.H. Kramers (Leiden-Leipzig, 1938), 2 vols.; *Kitâb Ṣûrat al-Arḍ* (Beirut, 1992).

Ibn Rusta, Abû ʿAlî, *Kitâb al-Aʿlâq an-Nafîsa*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1892) [BGA, VII]; D. Xvolson, *Izvestija o xozarax, burtasax, bolgarax, mad'jarax, slavjanax i russax Abu-Ali Axmeda ben Omar ibn Dasta* (St. Peterburg, 1869), partial Russ. trans.

Ibn Xurdâḏbih, Qâsim ʿUbaydallâh b. ʿAbdallâh, *Kitâb al-Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik. Liber viarum et regnorum*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1889) [BGA, VI]

Al-Iṣṭaxrî, Abu Isḥâq al-Fârîsî, *Kitâb Masâlik al-Mamâlik. Viae regnorum*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1870, reprint: Leiden, 1927) [BGA I]

Judah ha-Levi, *Kitâb al-ḥujja wa'd-Dalîl fi naṣr ad-Dîn aḏ-Ḏalîl*, *Kitâb al-Xazarî*, see under Judah ha-Levi in Hebrew sources

Al-Masʿûdî, Abû'l-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn, *Murûj aḏ-Ḏahab wa Maʿâdin al-Jawhar. Les prairies d'or*, Arabic text and French trans. C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille (Paris, 1861–1877), 9 vols., second, revised edition by Ch. Pellat (Beirut, 1966–1979) 7 vols. (Arabic), second, revised French trans. (Paris, 1962–1997), 5 vols.

——, *Kitâb at-Tanbîh wa'l-Išrâf*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1894) [BGA, VIII]

Müneccimbaşı (Munajjimbâšî), Aḥmed b. Lûṭfullâh, *Jâmiʿ ad-Duwal*, partial edition and English translation by V.F. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvân and Darband* (Cambridge, 1958), revised Russian translation: V.F. Minorskij, *Istorija Širvana i Derbenda X–XI vekov*, (Moskva 1963)

Al-Muqaddasî (al-Maqdîsî), Abû ʿAbdallâh, *Aḥsan at-Taqâsîm fî Maʿrîfat al-Aqâlîm. Descriptio imperii moslemici*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1877, second ed. 1906) [BGA, III]; ed. M. Maxzûm (Beirut, 1408/1984).

An-Nadîm, Abu'l-Faraj Muḥammad b. Isḥâq, *Kitâb al-Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, J. Roediger (Leipzig, 1871), 2 vols., B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadîm* (New York, 1970), 2 vols.

Aṭ-Ṭabarî, Abû Jaʿfar b. Jarîr, *Kitâb ar-Rasûl wa'l-Mulûk. Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar ibn Djarir aṭ-Ṭabarî*, ed. M.J. de Goeje et al. (Leiden, 1879–1901), 15 vols., see also *Taʾrîx aṭ-Ṭabarî*, ed. M. Ibrâhîm (Cairo, 1962–1977), 11 vols.

Al-Xwârazmî, *Liber Mafâtih al'Olum*, ed. G. van Vloten (Leiden, 1895).

Al-Yaʿqûbî, Aḥmad ibn Abî Yaʿqûb ibn Jaʿfar ibn Wahb al-kâtib al-maʿrûf bi-ibn Wâḍiḥ *Taʾrîx*, ed. M.Th. Houtsma (Leiden, 1883).

Yâqût b. ʿAbdallâh ar-Rûmî al-Ḥamawî, *Muʿjam al-Buldân. Yacuts geographisches Wörterbuch*, ed. F. von Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1866–1973), 6 vols., (Beirut, 1957), 5 vols.

Armenian

Agatʿangełos, Patmoutʿiwn Hayocʿ, ed. G. Tēr-Mkrtčʿean and S. Kanayeancʿ (Tiflis, 1909, reprint: Delmar NY 1980), R.W. Thomson, *Agathangelos: History of the Armenians* (Albany, NY, 1976).

Ananias of Širak, *The Armenian Geography: Ašxarhacʿoycʿ Movsēsi Xorenacʿwoy: Géographie du Moïse de Corène*, ed. trans. A. Soukry (Venice 1881), R.H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak (Ašxarhacʿoycʿ) The Long and the Short Recensions. Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften) Nr. 77 (Wiesbaden, 1992).

Łewond, *Patmutʿiwn Łewondeay meci vardapeti Hayocʿ*, ed. I. Ezeancʿ (St. Peterburg, 1897), Łewond, *The History of Lewond*, trans. Z. Arzoumanian (Philadelphia, 1982), *Ghévond, Histoire des guerres et des conquêtes des Arabes en Arménie*, trans. V. Chahnazarian (Paris, 1858), *Istorija xalifov Vardapeta Gevonda, pisatelja VIII v.*, trans K. Patkanov (St. Peterburg 1862).

Movsēs Dasxurancʿi (or Kałankatuacʿi): *Movsēsi Kałankatuacʿwoy Patmutʿiwn Ałuanicʿ ašxarhi*, ed. M. Emin (Moskva, 1860, reprinted Tiflis 1912), *Movsēsi Kałankatuacʿwoy Patmutʿiwn Ałuanicʿ ašxarhi, Kʿnnakan bnagirə ev nēražurjunə Varaz Arakʿēliani* (Yerevan, 1983), Movsēs Dasxurançi, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxurançi*, trans. C.J.F. Dowsett, London Oriental Series. Volume 8 (London, 1961), *Movses Kalankatuaci, Istorija strany Aluank,* trans. Š.V. Smbatjan (Erevan, 1984).

Kirakos Ganjakecʿi, *Patmutʿiwn Hayocʿ*, ed. K. Melikʿ-Ohanǰanjan (Yerevan, 1961).

Movsēs Xorenacʿi (Khorenacʿi), *Hayocʿ Patmutʿiwn*, ed. S.T. Malxasyan (Yerevan, 1961), R.W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenatsʿi: History of the Armenians*, *Harvard University*

Armenian Texts and Studies, 4, (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), J.P. and A. Mahé, *Moïse de Khorène. Histoire de l'Arménie* (Paris, 1993).
Pseudo Movsēs Khorenac'i : see Ananias of Širak
Sebēos, *Patmut'iwn Sebēosi Episkoposi i Herakln*, ed. T. Mihrdatian (Constantinopole, 1851), Sebēos, *Patmut'iwn*, ed. G. Abgaryan (Yerevan, 1979), *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, trans. R.W. Thomson, commentary by J. Howard-Johnston with the assistance of T. Greenwood, (Liverpool, 1999), 2 vols., French trans.: F. Macler, *Histoire d'Héraclius* (Paris, 1904), K. Patkanjan, *Istorija imperatora Irakla. Sočinenije jepiskopa Sebeosa pisatelja VII veka* (St. Peterburg, 1862).
Stepanos of Taron: *Stepanosi Taronec'woy Asołkan Patmout'iwn tiēzērakan*, ed. S. Malxasean (St. Peterburg, 1885), N. Emin, *Vseobščaja istorija Stepanosa Taronskogo Asox'ika* (Moskva, 1864).

Byzantine

Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Eng. trans. J (Gy.) Moravcsik and R.J.H. Jenkins, CFHB 1 (Washington, D.C., 1967), Konstantin Bagrjanorodnyj, *Ob upravlenii imperiej* (Moskva, 1989).
Constantini Porphyrogeniti Imperatoris De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae, ed. J.J. Reiske, CSHB, 2 vols. (Bonn, 1829–1830).
Menander Protector: *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. trans. R.C. Blockley (Liverpool, 1985)
Nikephoros of Constantinople: *Nicephorus Patriarcha, Historia sintomos. Breviarium rerum post Mauricium gestarum*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonae, 1837), *Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople. Short History, Text, Translation and Commentary by Cyril Mango*, Dumbarton Oaks, (Washington, D.C., 1990) [CFHB 13].
Notitiae Episcopatuum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, ed. J. Darrouzès (Paris, 1981).
Priskos: Priscus in: R.C. Blockley (ed., trans.), *The Fragmentary Classicizing Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus* (Liverpool, 1981, 1983), II
Theophanis Chronographia, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1883–1885, (reprint: Hildesheim 1963), *The Chronicle of Theophanes. An English Translation of anni mundi 6095–6305 (A.D. 602–813),* with introduction and notes, by Harry Turtledove, (Philadelphia, 1982), C. Mango and R. Scott, with the assistance of G. Greatrex, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford, 1997).
Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838).

Chinese

Chavannes, E., *Documents sur les T'ou-kiue (Turcs) Occidentaux* (Sbornik trudov Orxonskoj ekspedicii VI, Saint-Petersburg 1903), published together with his *Notes Additionnelles* (Paris, 1941).
Liu Mau-tsai, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T'u-küe)* Göttinger Asiatische Forshungen, 10 (Wiesbaden, 1958), 2 vols.
Shirota, S., "The Chinese Chroniclers of the Khazars: Notes on Khazaria in Tang Period Texts" *AEMAe* 14 (2005), pp. 231–261.
Lin Yang, "Some Chinese Sources on the Khazars and Khwarazm" *AEMAe* 11 (2000–2001), pp. 339–364.

Georgian

Kartlis Cxovreba, I–II, ed. S. Qauxčišvili (Tbilisi, 1955–1973), 4 vols. partial Eng. trans. (vol. I): in R.W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation* (Oxford, 1996), F. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIX^e siècle*, (St. Petersburg, 1856), G. Pätsch, *Das Leben Kartli's. Eine Chronik aus Georgien, 300–1200* (Leipzig, 1985).

Mokcevai Kartlisai: E.S. Takaišvili [Taqaišvili], "Obraščenije Gruzii," *Sbornik Materialov dlja opisanija mestnostej i plemën Kavkaza* XXVIII (Tiflis, 1900). G. Pätsch, "Die Bekehrung Georgiens *Mokcevay Kartlisay* (Verfasser unbekannt)," *Bedi Kartlisa. Revue de kartvélogie*, 33 (1975), pp. 288–337.

Hagiographies

D.M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints* (London 1956).

The Martyrdom of Abo of Tbilisi in: *Jveli kartuli agiograp'iuli literaturis jeglebi* I, ed. I.V. Abuladze [Abulaje] Tbilisi 1964, I, 46–81, K. Schultze,"Das Martyrium des heiligen Abo von Tiflis," *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur, NF* 13/4 (1905), pp. 4–41, P. Peeters, "Les Khazars dans la Passion de S. Abo de Tiflis," *Analecta Bollandiana* LII/1–2 (1934), 21–56, Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*, pp. 115–133; M. Bíró, "Abo's Georgian V*ita*," *AOH* 31/2 (1977), pp. 247–260.

The Martyrdom of David and Constantine: *C'amebai da ğuac'li c'midata da didebulta moc'ameta Davit da K'ost'ant'inesi* in *Čveni Saunje* I, ed. K. Kekelidze (K'. K'ek'elije) (Tbilisi, 1960).

The Martyrdom of Šušanik: *Mart'wilobai Šušanikisi* (the title in Georgian, Armenian, Russian: *Jakov Curtaveli, "Mučeničestvo Šušanik. Gruzinskij i armjanskij teksty izdal i issledovanijem, variantami, slovarem i ukazatelem snabdil Ilja Abuladze*), ed. I. Abuladze (Abulaje) (Tbilisi, 1938), P. Peeters, "Sainte Šoušanik, martyre en Arméno-Géorgie," *Analecta Bollandiana* 53 (1935), pp. 5–48.

The Passion of Evstati (Eustace) of Mcxeta in *Jveli kartuli agiograp'iuli literaturis jeglebi*, I, ed. I.V. Abuladze [Abulaje] Tbilisi 1964, I, pp. 30–45, "Das Martyrium des heiligen Eustatius von Mzchetha. Aus dem Georgischen übersetzt von Dschawachoff (vorgelegt und bearbeutet von Hrn. Harnack)," *Sitzungsberichte der königlich Pruessischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, vol. XXXVIII (1901), p. 847, pp. 875–902.

Hebrew

Abraham Ibn Daud, *Sefer Ha-Qabbalah. The Book of Tradition*, ed. trans. G.D. Cohen (Philadelphia, 1967).

Chwolsson, D. *Corpus inscriptionum Hebraicarum, enthaltend Grabschriften aus der Krim* (Sankt Peterburg, 1882).

Flusser, D. (ed.), *Sefer Yosippon*. (Jerusalem, 1978–1980), 2 vols.

Garkavi (see also Harkavy), A.J., *Skazanija evrejskix pisatelej o Xazarax i xazarskom carstve*, in *Trudy Vostočnogo Otdelenija Imperatorskogo Arxeologičeskogo Obščestva* 17 (1874).

Golb, N. and O. Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982., N. Golb, O. Pritsak. *Khazarsko-evrejskie dokumenty X veka*. ed. V. Ja. Petruxin (Moskva-Ierusalim,1997, 2nd edition, 2004)

Harkavy, A. and H.L. Strack, *Catalog der Hebräischen Bibelhandschriften in der Öffentlichen Kaiserlichen Bibliothek St. Petersburg* (Sankt Peterburg, 1875).

Harkavy, A., *Altjüdische Denkmäler aus der Krim, mitgetheilt von Abram Firkowitsch, Mémories de l' Académie Impériale des sciences de St.-Petersburg.* VII serie. T. XXIV, No. 1. (Sankt Peterburg, 1876).
Judah ha-Levi, *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, Hebrew trans. Yehudah Even Shmuel (Tel-Aviv, 1972), *Book of Kuzari*, trans. H. Hirschfeld (New York, 1946); Hebrew text and Eng. trans.: *The Kuzari. In Defense of the Despised Faith*, trans. N. D. Korobkin (Northvale, New Jersey-Jerusalem, 1998).
Kokovcov (Kokovtsov), P.K., *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932).
S. Schechter, "An Unknown Khazar Document" *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s., III (1912), pp. 181–219.

Persian

Gardîzî, ʿAbd al-Ḥayy b. Ḍaḥḥâk, *Taʾrîḫ-i Gardîzî*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Ḥabîbî (Tehran, 1363/1984), partial Eng. trans.: A.F. Martinez, "Gardizi's Two Chapters on the Turks," *AEMAe* 2, 1982, p. 109–217.
Ḥudûd al-ʿÂlam min al-Mašriq ilâ al-Maġrib, ed. M. Sutûdeh (Tehran, 1340/1962), V.F. Minorsky (trans.), *Ḥudûd al-ʿÂlam. "The Regions of the World." A Persian Geography,* E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, n.s. XI (London, 1937, 2nd rev. ed., London, 1970).

Slavic

Constantine and Methodius: T. Lehr-Spławiński, *Żywoty Konstantyna i Metodego (Obszerne)* (Poznań, 1959). See also: *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses, Fontes*, eds. F. Grivec, F. Tomšić in *Radovi Staroslavenskog Instituta* (Zagreb), IV (1960).
Polnoe sobranie russkix letopisej (St. Peterburg/Petrograd/Leningrad-Moskva, 1844–2004), 43 vols.
Povest' vremennych let (ed. Dmitrij S. Likhachev, Mikhail B. Sverdlov). Sankt-Peterburg, "Nauka", 1996.

Turkic

Kljashtornyj, S.G., "The Tariat (Terkhin) Inscription," *AOH* 36 (1983), pp. 335–366.
——, "The Tes Inscription of the Uighur Bögü Khagan," *AOH* 39 (1985), pp. 137–156.
Shinekhüü, M. *Orhon-Selengijn runi bičgijn šine dursgal* (Ulanbaatar,1980).
Tekin, T. "The Tariat (Terkhin) Inscription," *AOH* 37 (1982), pp. 43–86.
Tryjarski, E., "Runes and runelike scripts of Eurasian area," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 20 (2002), pp. 5–80, 21 (2003), pp. 5–90 and (2004), pp. 173–212.

Turko-Arabic

Dankoff, R. in collaboration with J. Kelly (eds. and transl.), *Maḥmūd al-Ḳāšyarī. Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīwān Luyāt at-Turk)*. Parts I–III. (Cambridge, Mass., 1982–1985), 3 vols.

General Works on the Khazars

Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar* (Leningrad, 1962).
Brooks, K.A., *The Jews of Khazaria* 2nd ed. (Lanham-Boulder-New York-Toronto-Oxford, 2006).
Dunlop, D.M., *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, 1954).

Golden, P.B., *Khazar Studies. An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars* (Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica, XXV/1–2 (Budapest, 1980), 2 vols.
Irmuxanov, B.B., *Xazary i Kazaxi* (Almaty, 2003).
Ludwig, D., *Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches im Licht der schriftlichen Quellen* (Münster, 1982).
Novoseľcev (Novoseľtsev), A.P. *Xazarskoe gosudarstvo i ego roľ v istorii Vostočnoj Evropy i Kavkaza* (Moskva, 1990).
Poljak, A.N., *Kazarya. Toldot mamlaxa yehudit beʾeropa*. Revised third edition (Tel-Aviv, 1951.
S.A. Romašov, *Istoričeskaja geografija xazarskogo kaganata (V–XIII vv.)* which has appeared serially in *AEMAe* 11 (2000–2001), pp. 219–338, 12 (2002–2003), pp. 81–221, 13 (2004), pp. 185–264, 14 (2005), pp. 107–193.

Special Studies

Abaev, V.I., *Osetinskij jazyk i folʾlor* (Moskva-Leningrad, 1949).
Ajbabin, A.I., *Étničeskaja istorija rannevizantijskogo Kryma* (Simferopol, 1999).
Altheim, F., *Geschichte der Hunnen* (Berlin, 1959–1952), 5 vols.
Ankori, Z., *The Karaites in Byzantium* (Jerusalem-New York, 1959).
Auzépy, M.-F., "Gothie et Crimée de 750 à 830 dans les sources ecclésiastiques et monastique grecques," *MAIET* 7 (Simferopol, 2000), pp. 324–31.
Bajčorov, S. Ja., *Drevnetjurkskie runičeskie pamjatniki Evropy. Otnošenie severokavkazskogo areala drevnetjurkskoj runičeskoj pisʾmennosti k volgo-donskomu i dunajskomu arealam.* (Stavropol, 1989).
Bálint, Cs., "Some Archaeological Addenda to Golden's Khazar Studies" *AOH*, 35 (1981), pp. 397–412.
——, *Die Archäologie der Steppe* (Wien-Köln, 1989).
Baratz (Barac), G.M., *Sobranie trudov po voprosu o evrejskom élemente v pamjatnikax drevne-russkoj pisʾmennosti* (Paris, 1927).
Barfield, T.J., *The Perilous Frontier. Nomadic Empires and China* (Oxford, 1989).
Bartha, A., *Hungarian Society in the 9th and 10th Centuries* (Budapest, 1975).
Bata, G.L., "The Turks who were called ΣΑΒΑΡΤΟΙ ΑΣΦΑΛΟΙ," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 20 (1996), pp. 177–187.
Bartoľd, V.V. (W. Barthold), *Dvenadcatʾ lekcij po istorii tureckix narodov Srednej Azii* in his *Sočinenija* (Moskva, 1963–1977), V, pp. 16–192.
Bazin, L., "Pour une nouvelle hypothèse sur l'origine des Khazar," *Materialia Turcica* 7–8 (1981–1982), pp. 51–71.
Beilis, V.M. "Arabskie avtory IX–pervoj poloviny X v. o gosudarstvennosti i plemennom stroe narodov Evropy," *Drevnejšie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR. Materialy i issledovanija*. 1985 god. (Moskva, 1986), pp. 140–149.
Benkő, L. (Hrsg.), *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Ungarischen* I–II, (Budapest, (1993–1994), 2 vols.
Bentley, J. , *Old World Encounters. Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (Oxford, 1993).
I. Berlin, *Istoričeskie sudʾby evrejskogo naroda na territorii russkogo gosudarstva* (Petrograd, 1919).
Berta, Á., "Die chasarische Benennung der Ungarn," in *Festgabe an Josef Matuz. Osmanistik—Turkologie—Diplomatik*, ed. Chr. Fragner & K. Schwarz (Berlin, 1992), pp. 7–11.
——, and A. Róna-Tas, "Old Turkic loan words in Hungarian," *AOH* 55 (2002), pp. 43–67.
Bíró, M., "Marwān ibn Muḥammad's Georgian Campaign," *AOH*, 29/1 (1975), pp. 289–99.

——, "Bahrām Čōbīn and the Establishment of the Principality in Kartli," *AOH* 33/2 (1979), pp. 177–185
——, "Georgian Sources on the Caucasian Campaign of Heracleios," *AOH*, 35/1 (1981), pp. 121–132
Bolotov, V.V., "K istorii imperatora Iraklija," *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, Vol. XIV (1909), pp. 68–124.
Bombaci, A., "Qui était Jebu Xak'an?", *Turcica* 2, 1970, pp. 7–24.
Brutzkus (Bruckus), Ju. D., *Pis'mo xazarskogo evreja* (Berlin, 1924)
——, *Istoki russkogo evrejstva* (Paris, 1939).
——, "The Khazar Origin of Ancient Kiev" *Slavonic and East European Review* (May, 1944), pp. 108–124
Bunardžić, R. *Izložba menore iz Čelareva* (Belgrad, 1980).
——, *Čelarevo. Risultati delle ricerche nelle necropoli dell'alto medioevo.* (Rome-Novi Sad, (1985)).
Chekin, L.S., "Christian of Stavelot and the Conversion of Gog and Magog. A Study of the Ninth-Century References to Judaism Among the Khazars" *Russia Mediaevalis*, IX/1 (1997), pp. 13–34.
Chwolson, see Chwolsson, Xvol'son.
Clark, L.V., "On a Chuvash development of **-d-*," *AOH* 32 (1978), pp. 371–376.
Cukerman, K. (see also Zuckerman, C.), "Xazary i Vizantija: pervyje kontakty," *MAIET*, VIII (Simferopol' 2001), pp. 312–333.
——, "O proisxoždenii dvoevlastija u xazar i obstojatel'stvax ix obraščenija v iudaizm" *MAIET* IX (2002), pp. 521–534.
Czeglédy, K., "Herakleios török szövetségesei," *Magyar Nyelv* XLIX (1953), 319–323.
——, "Khazar Raids in Transcaucasia in A.D. 762–764," *AOH* 11 (1960), pp. 75–88.
——, "Bemerkungen zur Geschichte der Chazaren," *AOH* 13 (1961), pp. 243–251.
——. "Das sakrale Königtum bei den Steppenvölkern," *Numen. International Review for the History of Religions* 13 (1966), pp. 14–26.
——, *A nomád népek vándorlása napkelettől napnyugatig* (Budapest, 1969), rev. Eng. trans. "From East to West: The Age of Nomadic Migrations in Eurasia," trans. P.B. Golden, in *AEMAe*, 3 (1983), pp. 25–125.
——, "A szakrális királyság a steppei népeknél (a kazároknál és a magyaroknál)" *Magyar Nyelv* 1970, [1974], pp. 11–17.
——, "Gardîzî on the History of Central Asia (746–780 A.D.)" *AOH*, 27 (1973), pp. 257–267.
Daunicht, H., *Der Osten nach der Erdkarte al-Huwarizmi's* (Bonn, 1970–1974). 4 vols.
DeWeese, D., *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (University Park, Penn., 1994).
Dimitrov, D., *Prabŭlgarite po severnoto i zapadnoto Černomorie: kŭm vŭprosa za tiaxnoto prisustvie i istorija v dnešnite ruski zemi i roljata im pri obrazuvaneto na bŭlgarskata dŭržava* (Varna, 1987).
Doerfer, G., *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente in Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1963–1975), 4 vols.
Dubiński, A., *Caraimica. Prace karaimoznawcze* (Warszawa, 1994).
Dunlop, D.M., "H.M. Baratz and His View of Khazar Influence on the Earliest Russian Historical Literature, Juridical and Historical" in *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 345–367.
Erdal, M., "The Turkic Nagy-Szent-Miklós inscription in Greek letters," *AOH* 42 (1988), pp. 221–234.
——, *Old Turkic Word Formation. A Functional Approach to the Lexicon*. Turcologica, 7 (Wiesbaden, 1991), 2 vols.
—— "Ein unbemerkter chasarischer Eigenname," *Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları* [1] (1991), pp. 31–36.

——, *Die Sprache der wolgabolgarischen Inschriften.* Turcologica, 13 (Wiesbaden, 1993).
——, *A Grammar of Old Turkic. Handbook of Oriental Studies* 8, 3. (Leiden, 2004).
Fedorchuk, A., "New Data on Firkowicz's Work at the Chufut-Qal'eh Cemetery," *Studies in a Karaite Community: Report of the Ben-Zvi Institute Expedition to the Jewish-Karaite Cemetery of Chufut-Qal'eh (the Crimea). A Collection of Papers*, ed. D. Shapira, Ben-Zvi Institute (Jerusalem 2007) [Hebrew; in press].
Fëdorov, Ja. A. and G.S. Fëdorov, *Rannie tjurki na Severnom Kavkaze* (Mosocw, 1978).
Fedotov, M.R., *Étimologičeskij slovar' čuvašskogo jazyka* (Čeboksary, 1996).
Firkowicz, A., *Sepher Abney Zikkaron li-Bney Yisrael* (Wilna 1872).
Flërova, V.E. *Graffiti Xazarii* (Moskva, 1997).
Fodor, I., *In Search of a New Homeland, the Prehistory of the Hungarian People and the Conquest*, (Budapest, 1982).
Franklin, S. and J. Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200* (London-New York, 1996).
Gadlo, A.V. *Étničeskaja istorija Severnogo Kavkaza IV–X vv.* (Leningrad, 1979).
——, *Étničeskaja istorija Severnogo Kavkaza X–XIII vv.* (SPb., 1994).
Garaeva N.G., "Svedenijia arabskix i persidskix istočnikov o poxodax k severu ot Derbenta (22/642–43 i 119/737 gg." *Istorija tatar s drevneišix vremën v semi tomax.* T.I. *Narody stepnoy Evrazii v drevnosti.* (Kazan, 2002). pp. 440–471.
Garsoïan, N.G., *Armenia Between Byzantium and the Sasanians*, Variorum Reprints, (London 1985).
Geland, E., "Die persische Feldzüge des Kaisers Heracleios," *BZ* 3 (1894), pp. 330–373.
Golden, P. B., "Hazar dili," *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı. Belleten* (1971), pp. 147–157.
——, "The Question of the Rus' Qağanate" *AEMAe*, 2 (1982), pp. 77–97.
——, "Khazaria and Judaism" *AEMAe*, 3 (1983), pp. 127–156.
——, "A New Discovery: Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, VIII/3–4 (1984), pp. 474–486.
——, "The Peoples of the south Russian steppes" in D. Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 263–270.
——, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, Turcologica, 9 (Wiesbaden, 1992).
——, "Gosudarstvo i gosudarstvennost' u xazar : vlast' xazarskix kaganov" in N.A. Ivanov (ed.), *Fenomen vostočnogo despotizma. Struktura upravlenija i vlasti* (Moskva, 1993), pp. 211–233.
——, "Religion Among the Qıpčaqs of Medieval Eurasia" *Central Asiatic Journal*, 42/2 (1998), pp. 180–237.
——, "Khazar Turkic Ghulâms in Caliphal Service" *Journal Asiatique*, 292/1–2 (2004), pp. 279–309, reprinted in C.E. Bosworth (ed.), *The Turks in the Early Islamic World* (Aldershot, UK, 2007), pp. 135–165.
——, "Khazarica: Notes on Some Khazar Terms" *Turkic Languages*, 9 (2005), pp. 205–222.
——, "Sacral Kingship Among the Khazars" *Pre-Modern Russia and Its World*, ed. K. Reyerson, Th. Stavrou, J. Tracy, Schriften zur Geistesgeschichte des östlichen Europas, Bd. 29 (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 79–102.
Gombocz, Z., "Die bulgarisch-türkischen Lehnwörter in der ungarischen Sprache," *Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne* 30, Helsinki (1912), 1–252.
Grégoire, H., "La vérité sur le Judaïsme des Khazars," *Byzantion* 9, pp. 484–488.
Grignaschi, M. "La Nihâyatu-l-'arab fī aḫbāri-l-Furs wa-l-'Arab," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 22 (1969), pp. 15–67.
——, "La Nihâyatu-l-'arab fī aḫbāri-l-Furs wa-l-'Arab et les Siyaru mulûk-i-'ājam du Ps. Ibn-al-Muqaffa'," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 26 (1972), pp. 83–184.
Grigor'ev, V.V. *Rossija i Azija* (SPb., 1876).
Gumilëv, L.N., *Otkrytie Xazarii* (Moskva, 1966).
——, *Drevnjaja Rus' i Velikaja Step'*. (Moskva, 1989).

Hamilton, J.R., *Les Ouïgours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties, d'après les documents chinois* (Paris, 1955).
Harva, U., *Die Religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker* Folklore Fellows Communications, LII, No. 125 (Helsinki, 1938).
Hauenschild, I., *Die Tierbezeichnungen bei Mahmud al-Kaschgari. Eine Untersuchung aus sprach- und kulturhistorischer Sicht.* Turcologica, 53 (Wiesbaden, 2003).
Helimski, E., "On probable Tungus-Manchurian origin of the Buyla inscription from Nagy-Szentmiklós (preliminary communication)," *Studia Etymologica Cracoviensia* 5 (2000), pp. 43–56.
W.B. Henning, "A Farewell to the Khagan of the Aq-Aqatārān," *BSOAS* 14/3 (1952), pp. 501–522 (= *Acta Iranica* 15, *W.B. Henning Selected Papers* II, Liége 1977, 387–408).
Horvath, J. and P.Wexler (eds.), *Relexification in creole and non-creole languages. (With special reference to Modern Hebrew, Haitian Creole, Romani and Rumanian.)* (Wiesbaden, 1997).
Howard-Johnston, J. "Byzantium, Bulgaria and the Peoples of Ukraine in the 890s," *MAIET* 7 (1999), pp. 342–56.
——, "The *De Administrando Imperio*: a Re-examination of the Text and a Re-evaluation of its Evidence about the Rus," in *Les centres proto-urbains russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient*, ed. M. Kazanski, A. Nersessian and C. Zuckerman, (Paris, 2000), pp. 301–336.
——, "The Official History of Heraclius' Persian Campaigns," *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*, ed. E. Dabrowa, Cracow 1994, pp. 57–87.
——, "Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire," *War in History* 6 (1999), pp. 1–44.
İnan, A., *Tarihte ve Bugün Şamanizm* (Ankara, 1954).
Kalinina, T.M., "Torgovye puti Vostočnoj Evropy (po dannym Ibn Xordadbexa i Ibn al-Fakixa"), *Istorija SSSR*. (Moscow), 1986. No. 4., pp. 68–82.
Khazanov, A.M., *Nomads and the Outside World* (Cambridge, 1984, 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, 1994).
——, "The Spread of World Religions in Medieval Nomadic Societies of the Eurasian Steppes" in M. Gervers, W. Schlepp (eds.), *Nomadic Diplomacy, Destruction and Religion from the Pacific to the Adriatic* (Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia, 1, Toronto, 1994), pp. 11–33.
Kargalov, V.V., *Vnešnepolitičeskie faktory razvitija feodal'noj Rusi* (Moskva, 1967).
Kizilov, M. and D. Mikhaylova, "The Khazar Kagante and the Khazars in European Nationalist Ideologies and Scholarship," *AEMAe* 14 (2005), pp. 31–53.
Kljaštornyj (Kliashtornyi), S.G., "Drevnejšee upominanie slavjan v Nižnem Povolžže," *Vostočnye istočniki po istorii narodov Jugo-Vostočnoj i Central'noj Evropy*. (Moskva, 1964), vyp. I., pp. 16–18.
Koestler, A. *The Thirteenth Tribe. The Khazar Empire and its Heritage* (London. 1976)
Konovalova, I.G., "Padenie Xazarii v istoričeskoj pamjati raznyx narodov," *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Vostočnoj Evropy 2001* (Moskva, 2003), pp. 171–190.
Kovalev, R.K., "What Does Historical Numismatics Suggest About the Monetary History of Khazaria in the Ninth Century? Question Revisited," *AEMAe*13 (2004), pp. 97–129.
——, "Commerce and Caravan Routes Along the Northern Silk Road (Sixth-Ninth Centuries). Part I: The Western Sector," *AEMAe* 14 (2005), pp. 55–105.
——, "Creating Khazar Identity through Coins: The Special Issue Dirham of 837/8" in F. Curta (ed.), *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, 2005), pp. 220–253.
Kovalevskaja, V.B., *Kavkaz i Alany* (Moskva, 1984).
Kristó, Gy., *Hungarian History in the Ninth Century* (Szeged, 1996).
A. Kryms'kyj, "Prolehomena do istorii xazariv, zvidky vony vzjalysja i jaka їx mova" *Movoznavstvo* (Kyïv, 1941)?

Kulakovskij, Ju., *Alany po svedenijam klassičeskix i vizantijskix pisatelej* (Kiev, 1899).
Kunik, O.O. [A.], *Firkovič i Toxtamyš* (Sankt Peterburg, 1876).
Kunstmann, H., *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Besiedlung Nord- und Mitteldeutschland mit Balkanslaven* (Munich, 1987).
Kuznecov, V.A., *Očerki istorii Alan* (Vladikavkaz, 1992).
Lewicki, T., "Kabarowie (Kawarowie) na Rusi, na Węgrzech i w Polsce we wczesnym średniowieczu," *Studia nad etnogenezą Słowian i kulturą Europy wczesnośredniowiecznej,* eds. G. Labuda and S.Tabaczyński, (Wrocław-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź, 1987–1988), 2, pp. 77–87.
Ligeti, L., "The Khazarian Letter from Kiev and its attestation in Runiform Script," *AOH* 31 (1981), pp. 5–18.
——, *A magyar nyelv török kapcsolatai a honfoglalás előtt és az Árpád-korban* (Budapest, 1986).
Magomedov, M.G., *Obrazovanie xazarskogo kaganata* (Moskva, 1983).
——, "Dagestan i strana Bersilija" in A.X. Xalikov et al. (eds.) *Rannie bolgary v Vostočnoj Evrope* (Kazan' 1989), pp. 24–34.
Manandjan, Ja.A., "Maršruty persidskix poxodov imp. Iraklija," *Vizantijskij Vremennik* (NS), Vol. III (1950), pp. 133–153.
Marquart, J., *Die Chronologie der alttürkischen Inschriften* (Leipzig, 1898).
——, *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i. Mit historisch-kritischem Kommentar und historischen und topographischen Excursen* (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Geselschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Neue Folge. Bd.III aus den Jahren 1899–1901 (Berlin 1901).
——, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Lepzig, 1903).
Markwart (Marquart), J., *A Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Ērānšahr (Pahlavi Text, Version and Commentary*), ed. by G. Messina S.I., Pontificio Istitituto Biblico (Roma, 1931).
Mavrodina, R.M. , *Kievskaja Rus' i kočevniki (Pečenegi, Torki, Polovcy*) (Leningrad, 1983).
——, "Rus' i kočevniki" in V.V. Mavrodin et al. eds., *Sovetskaja istoriografija Kievskoj Rusi* (Leningrad, 1973), pp. 210–221.
Mason, R.A.E., "The Religious Beliefs of the Khazars" *Ukrainian Quarterly*, LX/4 (Winter, 1995), pp. 383–415.
Menges, K.H., "Etymological Notes on some Päčänäg Names," *Byzantion* 17 (1944–5), pp. 256–80.
Mishin, D.E., *Sakaliba (slavjane) v islamskom mire v rannee srednevekov'e* (Moskva, 2002).
Mixeev, V.K., *Podon'e v sostav xazarskogo kaganata* (Xar'kov, 1985).
Moravcsik, J., *Byzantinoturcica*, 3. durchgearbeitete Auflage (Berlin, 1983), 2 vols.
Nagrodzka-Majchrzyk, T., "Chazarowie" in K. Dąbrowski, T. Nagrodyka-Majchryzk, E. Tryjarski, *Hunowie europejscy, Protobułgarzy, Chazarowie, Pieczyngowie* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1975), pp. 377–477.
Németh, J. (Gy.), "Die petschenegischen Stammesnamen," *Ungarische Jahrbücher* 10 (1930), pp. 27–34.
——, *A honfoglaló magyarság kialakulása* (Budapest, 1930, 2nd rev. ed., Budapest, 1991).
Noonan, T.S., "Did the Khazars Possess a Monetary Economy ? The Numismatic Evidence," *AEMAe* 2 (1982), pp. 219–267.
——, "What Does Historical Numismatics Suggest About the History of Khazaria in the Ninth Century?" *AEMAe* 3 (1983), pp. 265–281.
——, "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia: The Role of Arab-Khazar Relations in the Development of the Earliest Islamic Trade with Eastern Europe," *AEMAe* 4 (1984), pp. 151–282.
——, "Khazaria as an intermediary between Islam and Eastern Europe in the second half of the ninth century: the numismatic perspective" *AEMAe* 5 (1985)[1987]. pp. 179–204.

——, "Byzantium and the Khazars : A Special Relationship ?" in J. Shepard, S. Franklin (ed.), *Byzantine Diplomacy* (Aldershot, 1992), pp. 109–132.
——, "The Khazar Economy," *AEMAe* 9 (1995–1997), pp. 254–318.
Novoseľcev (Novoseltzsev), A.P. "Vostočnye istočniki o vostočnyx slavjanax i Rusi VI–IX vv." in A.P. Novoseľcev, V.T. Pašuto et al. (eds.), *Drevnerusskoe gosudarstvo i ego meždunarodnoe značenie* (Moskva, 1965), pp. 355–419.
Peeters, P., "Les débuts du Christianisme en Géorgie d'après les sources hagiographiques," *Analecta Bollandiana* L (1932), pp. 5–58.
Petruxin, V.Ja., *Načalo étnokul'turnoj istorii Rusi IX–XI vekov* (Moskva, 1995).
——, "K voprosu o sakral'nom statuse xazarskogo kagana: tradicija i real'nost'" *Slavjane i ix sosedi* 10 (2001), pp. 73–78.
—— and W. Moskovich, A. Fedorchuk, A. Kulik, D. Shapira (eds.), *Khazary. Khazars* in series *Jews and Slavs*, 16 (Moskva-Ierusalim, 2005).
Pletnëva, S.A., *Ot kočevij k gorodam* (Moskva, 1967).
——, *Kočevniki srednevekov'ja* (Moskva. 1982).
——, *Sarkel i "šëlkovyj put'"* (Voronež, 1996).
——, *Očerki xazarskoj arxeologii* (Moskva-Ierusalim, 1999).
Pritsak, O., "The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism," *Harvard Ukranian Studies* 2/3 (1978), pp. 261–281.
——, "The Role of the Bosporus Kingdom and Late Hellenism as the Basis for the Medieval Cultures of the Territories North of the Black Sea" in A. Ascher et al. (eds.), *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern* (New York, 1979), pp. 3–21.
——, *The Origin of Rus'*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1981).
——, "The Pre-Ashenazic Jews of Eastern Europe in Relation to the Khazars, the Rus' and the Lithuanians" in H. Aster, P.J. Potichnyj (ed.), *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective* 2nd ed. (Edmonton, 1990), pp. 3–21.
Rayfield, D., *The Literature of Georgia. A History* (Oxford, 1994).
Róna-Tas, A., "A kazár népnévről" *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* 84 (1982), pp. 349–380.
——, "Újabb adatok a kazár népnév történetéhez" *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* 85 (1983), pp. 126–133.
——, *A honfoglaló magyar nép. Bevezetés a korai magyar történelem ismeretébe* (Budapest, 1996, 1997[2]).
——, "Ugor, ogur or ugur? Remarks on the name "Finno-Ugrian" in: Mészáros, E. (ed.), *Ünnepi könyv Mikola Tibor tiszteletére* (Szeged, 1996), pp. 265–269.
——, "An "Avar" word: *terem*" in: Berta, Á., B. Brendemoen, C.Schönig (eds.) *Symbolae Turkologicae*, (Uppsala, 1996), pp. 181–188.
——, "Western Old Turkic" in: Johanson, L. [Ed.] *The Mainz Meeting. Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Turkish Linguistics*, August 3–6, 1994, (Wiesbaden, 1998), pp. 619–626.
——, *Hungarians and Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Budapest, 1999), rev. Eng. trans of *A honfoglaló magyar nép*.
——, "Where was Khuvrat's Bulgharia?" *AOH* 53 (2000), pp. 1–22.
——, "Novye dannye k istorii étnonima "khazar" in: *Hungaro-Rossica, Bjulleten' (Newsletter), Rossijskaja Akademija nauk, Obščestvo Vostokovedov*, (Moskva, 2002), pp. 217–230.
——. "Turkic—Alanian—Hungarian contacts," *AOH* 58 (2005), pp. 205–213.
Roux, J-P. , *La religion des Turcs et des Mongols* (Paris, 1984).
Russell, J.R. *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series Volume Five, (Cambridge 1987).
Rybakov, B.A., "K voprosu o roli Xazarskogo kaganata v istorii Rusi," *Sovetskaja Arxeologija*, 18 (1953), pp. 128–150.
Senga, T., "The Toquz Oghuz Problem and the Origin of the Khazars," *Journal of Asian History* 24 (1990), pp. 57–69.

Shapira, D. "Yitshaq Sangari, Sangarit, Bezalel Stern, and Avraham Firkowicz: Notes on Two Forged Inscriptions," *AEMAe* 12 (2002–2003), pp. 223–260).
—— (with contributions by M. Ezer, A. Fedortchouk, M. Kizilov), "Beginnings of the Karaites of the Crimea Prior to the Early Sixteenth century," *A Guide to Karaite Studies: An Introduction to the Literary Sources of Medieval and Modern Karaite Judaism*, ed. M. Polliack (Leiden, 2003), pp. 709–728.
——, "Indeed Ancestral Tombs? – Historical Data and their Modification in the Tombstone Inscriptions of Abraham Firkowicz," *Pe'amim* 98–99 (Winter-Spring, 2004), pp. 261–318 [Hebrew].
——, "Judaization of Central Asian Traditions as Reflected in the so-called Jewish-Khazar Correspondence, with Two Excurses: A. Judah Halevy's Quotes; B. Eldad Ha-Dani; and With An Addendum" in *Khazary*, ed. by V. Ja. Petruxin, W. Moskovich, A. Fedorchuk, A. Kulik, D. Shapira in series *Jews and Slavs*, 16, (Moskva-Ierusalim, 2005), pp. 503–521.
——, "'Tabernacle of Vine'. Some (Judaizing?) Features in the Old Georgian *Vita* of St. Nino," *Memorial R.P. Michél van Esbroeck, S.J.*: *Scrinium* 2 (2006), pp. 273–306.
——, "Stray Notes on Aksum and Himyar," *Memorial R.P. Michél van Esbroeck, S.J.*: *Scrinium* 2 (2006), pp. 433–443.
——, "Remarks on Avraham Firkowicz and the Hebrew *Mejelis 'Document'*" *AOASH* 59/2 (2006), pp. 131–180.
Shepard, J., "The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism and Byzantium's Northern Policy" *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, n-s. XXXI (1998), pp. 11–34.
Shnirelman, V. A., *The Myth of the Khazars. Intellectual Antisemitism in Russia, 1970s–1990s*. Jerusalem: The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, (Hebrew University, 2002).
Sorlin, I., "Le problème des Khazares et les historiens soviétiques dans les vingt dernières années" *TM*, 3 (1968), pp. 423–455.
Stratos, A.N., *Byzantium in the Seveneth Century, I: 602–634* (Amsterdam, 1968).
Szyszman, S., "Le roi Bulan et le problème de la conversion des Khazars" *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 33 (1957), pp. 68–76.
——, "Les Khazars. Problèmes et controvérses" *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 152 (1957), pp. 174–221.
Toločko, P.P., *Drevnjaja Rus'* (Kiev, 1987).
——, *Kyïvs'ka Rus'* (Kyïv, 1996).
——, *Kočevye narody stepej i Kievskaja Rus'* (St. Petersburg, 2003).
——, "K voprosu o xazaro-iudejskom proisxoždenii Kieva," *Xazarskij al'manax* 2 (Kiev-Khar'kov-Moskva, 2004), pp. 99–108.
Torpusman, A.N., "Antroponimija i étničeskie kontakty narodov Vostočnoj Evropy v srednie veka" in M. Členov (ed.), *Imja-étnos-istorija* (Moskva, 1989), pp. 48–53.
Tortika, A.A.,"'Kievskoe pis'mo' xazarskix evreev: k probleme kritiki soderžanija istočnika" *MAIET*, X (2002), pp. 535–542.
van Esbroeck, M., "Une chronique de Maurice a Héraclius dans une récit des sièges de Constantinople," *Bedi Kartlisa* 34 (1976), pp. 74–96.
——, "Lazique, Mingrélie, Svanéthie et Aphkhazie du IV^{e} au IX^{e} siècle," *Il Caucaso: cerniera fra cultura del Mediterraneo all Persia (secoli IV–XI). 20–26 aprile 1995*, Settimane di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 43 (Spoletto 1996), pp. 195–221.
Varady, L., "Revision des Ungarn-Image von Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos," *BZ* 82 (1989), pp. 22–58.
Vaščenko, É.D.,"*Xazarskaja problema" v otečestvennoj istoriografii XVIII–XX vv.* (St. Petersburg, 2006).
Vasiliev, A.A., *The Goths in Crimea* in Monographs of the Medieval Academy in America 11, (Cambridge Mass., 1936).
Vernadsky, G., *Ancient Russia* (New Haven, 1943).
Vixnovič, V.L., *Karaim Avraam Firkovič. Evrejskie rukopisi, istorija, putešestvija* (SPb., 1997).

Weinreich, U. Yiddish and Colonial German in Eastern Europe: The differential impact of Slavic. *American contributions to the Fourth International Congress of Slavicists* (The Hague, 1958), pp. 369–421.
Weinryb, B. , "The Khazars. Annotated Bibliography" *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, Library of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, VI (Spring, 1963), pp. 111–129.
——, "The Beginnings of East European Jewry in Legend and Historiography" in M. Ben-Horin et al. (eds.), *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman* (Leiden, 1962), pp. 445–502.
Werner, J., *Der Grabfund von Malaja Pereščepina und Kuvrat, Kagan der Bulgaren*, (München, 1984).
Wexler, P., "Jewish interlinguistics: facts and conceptual framework," *Language* 57 (1981), pp. 99–149.
——, *Explorations in Judeo-Slavic linguistics* (Leiden, 1987).
——, "Yiddish—the fifteenth Slavic language," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 91 (1991), pp. 1–150, 215–25.
——, *The Balkan substratum of Yiddish. A reassessment of the unique Romance and Greek components*. (Wiesbaden, 1992).
——, "Jewish linguistics: 1981–1991–2001," Historical linguistics 1991. *Papers from the 10th International Conference on Historical Linguistics,* ed. J. van Marle (Amsterdam-Philadelphia, 1993), pp. 343–361.
——, *The Ashkenazic Jews. A Slavo-Turkic people in search of a Jewish identity* (Columbus, Ohio, 1993).
——, *The non-Jewish origins of the Sephardic Jews* (Albany, 1996).
——, "Što mohuc' idyš, sučasny iwryt, èsperanta a taksama serbalužyčane, palešuki i xazary skazac' pra paxodžanne habrèjaw-aškenazi?" *Arche* 3 (2000), pp. 117–26.
——, *Two-tiered relexification in Yiddish: the Jews, the Sorbs, the Khazars and the Kiev-Polessian dialect* (Berlin-New York, 2002).
——, [ms.] *An etymological dictionary of the Yiddish language. (Motivating component choice in relexified Sorbian and Kiev-Polessian).*
Whittow, M., *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025* (London, 1996).
Xvol'son, D. "Evrei-karaimy", *Žurnal Ministerstva vnutrennix del* (1843), part 1, pp. 263–284.
Yarmolinsky, A., "The Khazars, A Bibliography" *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* XLII (1938), pp. 695–710.
——, "The Khazars [an annotated] Bibliography 1940–1958" *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* LXIII (1959), pp. 237–241.
Zajączkowski, A., *Ze studiów nad zagadnieniem chazarskim*. (Kraków, 1947).
——, "O kulturze chazarskiej i jej spadkobiercach," *Myśl Karaimska* 1(1946), pp. 5–34.
Zetejšvili, S.G., "Svedenija ob alanax v 'Xronografii' Feofana," *Drevnejšie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR 1975g.* (Moskva, 1976), pp. 81–86.
Zuckerman, C. (see also Cukerman, K.) "On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus' Oleg and Igor," *REB* 53 (1995), pp. 237–270.
——, "Two Notes on the Early History of the *Thema* of Cherson" *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 21 (1997), pp. 210–222.
——, "Les Hongrois au pays de Lebedia: Une nouvelle puissance aux confins de Byzance et de la Khazarie ca 836–889," in TO EMPOLEMO BUZANTIO/ *Byzantium at War (9th–12th c.)*, Athens 1997, pp. 51–74; tr. in Russian, with an appendix: "Vengry v strane Levedii. Novaja deržava na granicax Vizantii i Xazarii ok. 836–889 gg.," *MAIET* 6 (Simferopol 1998), pp. 659–684.
——, "Heraclius in 625", *REB* 60, 2002, pp. 189–197.
Website: www.khazaria.com

INDEX

Aaron, Khazar ruler 240
Abasgia, see Abkhazia
ʿAbbâsids, see Caliphate
ʿAbd al-Malik, Umayyad caliph (685–705) 375
ʿAbd al-Raḥmân b. Rabîʿa al-Bâhilî 378
Abkhaz, Abkhazia (Abasgia, Abxazia, Apʿxazetʿi) 136, 172, 305 and n. 75, 341 n. 148, 347, 348
Abo of Tbilisi (Georgian saint) 135, 151, 347–50
Abraham ibn Daud 149
Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-ʿIbrî, see Bar Hebraeus
Abu'l-Qâsim Saʿîd al-Andalusî 199
Adiabene 153
Adygeis 364
Africa 385
+Ak 79, 91
Aḥmad b. Kûyâ 138
Ajbabin, A.I. 425, 432
Akatzirs 37, 52, 54, 401
Akhiezer, Golda 110
Akopjan (Hakobyan), A. 404–5, 407
Alans, Alania 34, 36, 46, 50, 59–67, 124, 181–83, 192, 220, 240, 304 and n. 65, 305 n. 69, 306 n. 80, 308, 322, 348, 352, 421–22
  conversion to Christianity 124
Albania (Caucasian) 124, 164, 403, 406–07, 409, 413, 416, 428, 430–31
Alexander, Byzantine Emperor (912–913) 166
Alexandria 230
Alfraganus 198, 204
Alma 220
Almush clan 274
Ałp Iłutʿuêr (Alp Elteber) 124, 429
Altaic peoples and languages 123
Altheim, Franz 198, 205, 270
Alupka (Alubikha, Alupha) 122, 220
Alus 220
Amastris 170
Amphoras 225–6, 241–43
Ananias of Širak, see Širakec'i, Ananias
Anatolia 164, 414
Annals of Salzburg 275
al-Andalus 379, 380, 381, 386
Animal husbandry 228
Ankori, Zvi 56, 143
Antony, Archbishop of Bosporos 171
Apiculture 215, 228
Arab Geographers 173, 176, 183, 185
Arab Historians 176
Arab Sources 183, 186
Arabia, Arabs 47, 164, 167, 179, 216, 358, 374, 431–32
  Arabo-Khazar wars 35, 137, 142
  Second civil war 173
Araxes 164
Ardabîl 167
Arkhipov A.A. 263
Armenia 146, 151, 164, 167, 376, 431
The Armenian Geography, see *Ašxarhac'oyc'*
Árpád 188, 252, 269, 274, 275
Arsiya 377, see also Ors
Aryans 362, 366
Asia Minor, see Anatolia
Asian Sarmatia 418–19, 425
Askold 246, 247, 252
Asparukh, Asparhruk 418–19, 427–28, 432
Ašxarhac'oyc', Ašxarhats'uyts' (The "Armenian Geography" of Pseudo-Movsês Xorenac'i, see also Širakec'i, Ananias) 315–18, 418, 422–23, 425, 427–29
Artamonov Mixail I. 20, 26–29, 31–35, 38, 39, 45, 48, 54, 152, 155, 159, 202, 205, 248, 252, 402, 403, 427
Ashina, Ašina, A-shih-na (Türk royal clan) 32, 37, 53, 158, 317, 403, 404
Ashkenazic Jews, Ashkenazim 56, 355, 363, 365, 366, see also Jews, East European
  diseases 397
  ethnogenesis 387–97
  ethnographic evidence 396
Asia Minor (see also Anatolia) 165
Astel, see Atıl
Atıl (Atïl, Atil, Astel, At'l, Itil, Etil) 2, 34, 35, 144, 155, 161, 174, 175, 208–15, 218, 228–30, 233, 241, 375, 419, 422, 424

mosques in 383
Muslims in 377, 383, see also Khazar Muslims
Atropatene (Persian Azarbayjan) 164
Austria 387
Avars ("Pseudo-Avars") 271, 272, 389, 397, 414, 421
Azarbayjan (Aḏarbâyjân, Azerbaijan) 147, 151, 167, 406
Azov, Sea of 221, 226, 233, 243, 424

Bâb al-Abwâb, see Darband
Babalikashvili, Nissan 116, 117
Baghdad 231, 233
al-Bakrî, Abu ʿUbaid 149, 196, 197, 200, 204, 205
al-Balâdhurî (al-Beládsori), Aḥmad b. Yaḥyâ b. Jâbir 142, 153, 201, 202, 205
Balanjar (Balandjar) 45, 378
Balashov, Dmitri 358
Bálint, Csanád 48
Balkan, Balkans 178, 179
immigration to the German lands 392, 396–97
Balkh 229
Baghdad 231, 233
Baltic Sea 209, 234, 235, 237, 239
Barac (Baratz) G.M. 20
Baranov, I.A. 222, 223, 243
Barč/Warâz/Bolčân clan 37, 155
Bar Hebraeus, Gregory Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-ʿIbrî 198
Barley 222
Baron, Salo W. 55
Bartol'd Vasilij V. (Barthold, Wilhelm) 201, 205
Barsalia, Bersâlia, Berzilia 401, 421–24, 426
Barsils (Baslk', Basłk', Barsilk', Barselt) 54, 419, 421, 424–28, 430
Bashkiria, Bashkirs 186, 272, 422–23
Basil I, Byzantine Emperor (867–886) 166, 255, 400
Basil II, Byzantine Emperor (976–1025) 166, 169
Barṣûlâ, see also Barsils 422–23
Bat Bayan 273
Beavers, see Trade Products
Beg, see Khazars, *Qağan Beg*
Beilis V. M. 202, 203, 205
Belarus', Belarusian 390–91, 394–95
Bela Veža, see Sarkel
Belgorod 368
Benjamin, Khazar ruler 240
Bentley, Jerry H. 126–27
Berbers 394
Beresovets D.T. 253
Bessarabia 48
Bezverkhii, Viktor 362, 363
Bilge Qağan, Eastern Türk Ruler (716–734) 126
Birnbaum H. 264
Birth, miraculous (of rulers) 130
Bithynia 179, 181
Black Sea 170, 174–75, 182, 183, 233
Bluč'an 350–351
Bögü Uyğur Qağan (759–779) 128, 129
Bolgar (Bulğar) language, see Turkic languages, Bulğar, Oğuric/Bulğaric-Čuvaš
Bolgar-Chuvash branch, see Turkic languages, Oğuric/Bulğaric-Čuvaš
Boluščï 88–89
Bombaci, Alessio 403, 412, 413
Boris, Ruler of Balkan Bulgaria (852–889) 139
Bosporus (city), conquered by Khazars 430
Bruckus (Brutzkus) J.D. 20
Buddhism 123, 125, 126, 130
Buğa the Elder 9, 203, 351–52
Bulan (Khazar ruler) 33, 147, 154
Bulğar (Bulghar, Bolgar), Bulğars 221, 222, 223, 225, 272, 417–19, 424, 427, 428
Balkan 125, 139, 164, 167, 168, 175, 178, 179, 180, 181, 187, 432
Black 240
Danubian 275
Kuban 60, 63
Pontic 34, 36, 125
Proto-Bulğaric 36, 41, 51, 424, 427
Tithe 238, 241
Tribute 238
Volga 23, 35, 42, 44, 125, 128, 143, 148, 172, 181, 182, 183, 186, 192, 212, 213, 227–38, 240, 241, 244, 422, 427
Bulğaric, see Oğuric
Burṭâṣ 227–29, 231, 241
Agriculture 228
Craft production 228
Furs 228 (*Burṭâṣî*)
Buyids 178
Bwsxk', Bwšxk' (Bušxk') 419, 422
Byzantium, Byzantines 7, 32, 35, 43, 44, 59, 61, 124, 136, 140, 144, 154, 161, 164, 165, 172, 218, 221, 223, 224, 225,

26, 229, 230, 232, 240, 373, 375–78, 399, 401, 402, 431
intelligence about north 185
Jews of 144
Propagation of Christianity 170–72
Relations with Khazars 168–70, 173–76, 181–83
Rescue of POWs from Bulğars 187
Ships 243

Caesar, Julius 270
Caliphate 1, 9, 28,59, 123, 163–4, see also Islam, Islamic World
Umayyad 8, 32, 47, 137, 233, 375
Umayyad, Spanish 145, 154
ʿAbbâsid 8, 9, 124, 141, 149, 174, 233, 235, 236
Cambridge Document ("Schechter Document") 145, 146, 154, 157, 158, 240, 308, 308 n. 5, 327, 327 n. 90, see also Khazars, Hebrew Correspondence
Camels 228, 230
Carolingians 154 178
Carpathian Basin 178
Hungarian conquest of 275–76
Carpathian mountains 187
Caspian Sea 48, 49, 148, 164, 174, 182, 208, 231, 233, 234, 401, 419, 421, 426
Caspian-Caucasus route 238, 240
Č'at' Kasar 17
Ča:tïr 80
Cattle, cows 216, 218,
Čavïš-yïgar 80–81, 89, 94
Caucasus 41, 47, 161, 109, 163–64, 167, 171, 182, 192, 229, 230, 231, 233, 374, 377
North 7, 35, 38, 45, 59, 64, 124, 401, 402, 403, 419, 422, 431
Čelarevo necropolis 33, 150, 397
Celts 385
Central Asia 229, 231, 232, 237, 238, 239, 240
Ceraunian Mountains 427
Chalcedon 329–31
Cherson, see Kherson
China 7, 128, 130, 392
Christianity 8, 34, 38, 39, 123, 124, 125, 131, 136, 144, 148, 150, 152, 153 210, 211, 281, 284, 360, 361, 362, 363, 369
Arian 124
Among Alans 124
Among Balkan Bulğars 139
Among Slavs 125
Among Hungarians 124, 128, 131
Among Khazars 135, 136, 140, 144, 150, 162
Nestorian 129, 130
Chronicle of Brussels 411
Chwolson, Daniel, see Xvol'son
Chufut-Qal'eh 109, 111, 113, 116, 117, 121
Čiček, Khazar princess 151
Činggis Qan 126
Constantine/Cyrill 124, 139–40, 151, 159, 400
Life of (*Vita Constantini*) 132, 147, 152, 154, 170
Constantine V Copronymus, Byzantine emperor (741–775) 151, 168, 173, 399, 432
Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, Byzantine Emperor (913–915) 13, 33, 161, 218, 247, 250, 251, 273, 274
De Administrando Imperio 169, 171, 172, 174, 176–86
scholia to *De Administrando Imperio* 185
De Cerimoniis 178, 181
De Thematibus 178
Excerpta Historica 178
Constans II Byzantine Emperor (641–68) 408, 428
Constantinople 14, 161, 165, 169, 174, 175, 176, 181, 230, 241, 381, 414
Conversion 123–30, 137–39, 153, 375, 376, 383, see also under Alans, Huns, Khazars, to Judaism 279–81, 388–89
Conversion of Kartli 313, 314, 320
Č'op'ak', čoppa, coppay 131, 132
Č'or, see Darband
Cordoba 381
Craft production 224, 228
Creole languages 388
Crimea (Crimean Peninsula) 8, 48, 109, 117, 122, 136, 152, 154, 165, 168, 169–71, 173, 174, 219–27, 240, 241, 243, 431–32
Agriculture 222, 223, 226
Craft production 224
Viniculture 242
Croatian 392
Ctesiphon 416
Cumans (Qıpčaqs) 11, 27, 56, 305, 334
Curopalate of Iberia 172
Čuvaš (Chuvash) 14
Czeglédy, Károly 15

d > *r* 83–4, 97–8
Daghestan 41, 45, 49, 135, 152
Damascus 408
Danube River 180, 184, 218, 417, 427
Darband, Derbend (Bâb al-Abwâb) 135, 164, 231, 303, 303, 318, 319, 321, 322, 341, 342, 350, 351, 375, 407, 414, 429–30
Darial, Pass of 407
Dasxuranc'i (Daskhurants'i), Movsēs 17, 124, 171, 403–5, 407, 409
Daunicht H., 198, 205
De Administrando Imperio, see Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus
Deinard, Efraim 109, 112
De Weese, Devin 127, 128, 157, 158, 161
Dichev, Theodor 366
al-Dimašqî, Šams ad-Dîn Abu ʿAbdallâh Muḥammad 144
Dirhams 232–39
Dnepr (Dnieper) River 7, 48, 164, 176, 181, 186, 187, 212, 218, 230, 239, 417, 424
Dnestr (Dniester) River 218
Doğ > *yoğ* (*yog*) 82, 132 n. 53
Don River and Steppes 28, 25, 48, 52, 164, 169, 174, 182, 187, 192, 218, 219, 223, 230, 234, 242, 243, 419, 428
Donec (Donets) River 48, 164, 192, 223, 230, 234
Dorn, Boris A. (J.A.) 21, 112
Doros (see also Mangup) 170, 171
  Metropolitanate of 136
Dowsett, Charles J.F. 404, 408, 410
Dreams, role in conversion tales 130
Dromos 179
Dubnov, Shimon 110
Dunlop Douglas M. 16, 26, 30–31, 33, 45, 54, 139, 151, 202, 203, 205, 207, 208, 421
Dvornik, Francis 11
Dyr 246, 247, 252

Eaton, Richard 127, 158
Egypt 379
Eldad ha-Dani 141, 208
Embassies 376, 379, 383
Emelianov, Valery 361, 362
English 391
Erdal, Marcel 41, 144 n. 109
Ermine 230, 231, see also furs
Ermolaev V. 358
Esperanto 391
Etelküzü 273, 274, 276
Eupatoria 111
Euphrates 164
Europe, 125, 235, 236, 237, 239, 241, 242, 243, 358, 370, 377, 378, 385, 418
  Eastern 353, 354, 370
  Northern 235, 236, 237, 239, 243
  Southeastern 241, 242
Evseev, Evgenii 366
Exile 281, 284
Ezer, Michael 110

Faḍlûn the Kurd 305 and n. 76, 306 n. 80
al-Farghânî 198
Fedorchuk (Fedortchouk), Artem 109, 110, 112
Fëdorov, A.F. 37
Fëdorov, G.S. 37
Finnoi-Ugrian 8, 46, 55, 426
Firkowicz, Abraham S. 21, 110–22
Fishing 224
Flërov, Valerij S. 253
Flërova, Valentina E. 51, 52, 242
Ford, Henry 365
Fox 228, 231, 241 see also furs
Fraehn, Christian M. 21
Franks 47, 272
French 397
Furs, fur pelts 228, 230, 231, 237, 241, 243
  Burṭâṣî 228

Gadlo, Aleksandr V. 38
Garaeva N. 203, 205
Gardîzî, ʿAbd al-Ḥayy b. Ḍaḥḥak 142, 196, 200, 203, 205, 215, 217, 238, 422
Garkavi see Harkavy
Gazaria, Gazari 1, 139
Gening, V.F. 427
Geniza (Cairo) 40
Geniza letter see Khazar, Hebrew Correspondence
Germanic languages and peoples 123, 178, 179, 388–96
Ghassânids 378
Ghulâms 212
Ghuzz, see Oğuz
Glazunov, Ilia 356
Globa, Pavel 357
Golb, Norman 40, 56, 146, 157, 258, 260
Golden Horde 53

Golden, Peter B. 32, 39, 41, 48, 202, 217, 295, 256, 257, 262, 423
Golubovskij, P.V., 20
Gombocz, Zoltán 269, 270, 271
Gostata, Gostjata ben Kjabar Kohen 101–03, 260
Goťe (Gauthier), J.V. 25
Goths, Gothia 124, 170,
Crimean 136, 169–72, 174
Grains 228
Greek 385
Grignaschi, M. 402
Grigor'ev (Grigoryev), Vasilij 19, 109
G-ruzin 220
Gumilev, Lev N. 11, 27, 28, 32, 35, 45, 356, 357, 358, 368
Györffy, György 217
Gyula 13

Haemus Mountains 180
Halevi, Judah 1, 149, 279–90
Al-Ḥamdânî, ʿAbd al-Jabbâr b. Muḥammad 148
Ḥamdânids 178
Ḥarkavy, Abraham (Garkavi, A. Ja.) 21, 109, 110, 112, 121, 122, 201, 205
Hârûn b. Gharib al-Khal 376
Hârûn al-Rašîd, ʿAbbâsid Caliph (786–809) 56, 144, 151, 155, 159
al-Ḥasan al-Marrakushî 201
Ḥasdai (Hasdai, Hisdai) b. Šaprûṭ (Shaprut) 22, 141, 145, 146, 157, 158, 121, 257, 276, 284–85, 380, 381
Hebrew, Hebroid 387–88, 392–95
among Khazars 384
influences in Rus' via Khazars 20
Hephthalites 7, 41, 42, 53, 134
Heraclius, Byzantine Emperor (610–641) 41, 42, 54, 146, 152, 403–06, 408, 411–15, 428–29
siege of Tbilisi 331–45, 415
Hewsen, Robert H. 418, 422–3
Hilitβēr 81–82
Hippic Mountains 418–19, 427–28
Hishâm ibn al-Kalbî 197
Hitler, Adolph 357, 365
Hlgu 258, 259, 260
Honey, see Trade Products
Horses 214, 216, 218, 223, 228, 230
Sacrifices of 131
Howard-Johnston, James 405
Hruševs'kyj, Myxajlo 24, 27
Ḥudûd al-ʿÂlam 208, 213, 215
Human sacrifice 132, 134
Hungarians (Magyars), Hungary 8, 10, 12, 33, 48, 159, 217, 232, 239, 274, 387–88, 397, 424, 426
alliance with Khazars 184, 186
date of defeat and relocation 186–87
defeat and migration in 890s 175, 180, 181, 184, 187
defeat and relocation *ca.* 830 184
division 184, 190
dynastic history 184, 186, 188, 191
Finno-Ugrian language 186, 187, 190, 191
in Crimea 170
investiture of Khazar client-ruler 184, 188, 191
Kavar (Khazar) tribe, see Qabar
Language, Finno-Ugric and Turkic elements in 14, 186, 271
Proto-Hungarians 13, 19
raids on Thrace 179
renamed Turks 187, 190, 191
rulers (*archontes*) 172
Savartoi Asphaloi 190
Scholarship on Khazars 12, 13, 17, 18, 19
territory before *ca.* 830 186
tribes 185, 190–91
Huns 13, 36, 37, 52, 172, 410
Khazars = Huns 428–29
Language 39
North Caucasian 17, 37, 124, 128, 131, 132, 171, 174
Hunting 219, 224
al-Ḫuwârizmî, see Al-Khwârazmî
Ḫusraw I Anôširvân (Husraw, Khusraw, Khusro Anôšurwân, Anûširwân), Sasanid ruler (532–79) 7, 54, 297, 299, 300, 301 n. 47, n. 302 n. 55, 320 n. 59, 402, 406,
"Deeds of" see *Kârnâmag*
Ḫusraw II (Khusro), Sasanid ruler (590–628) 404–06, 410–11, 415, 417
Ḫz 138

Iakerson, Shimon 115, 121
Iberia (Georgia) 177, 415, 431
Ibn Aʿṯam (Aʿtham) al-Kûfî, Aḥmad 21, 23, 142, 153, 201, 202, 203, 205
Ibn al-Aṯîr (Athîr), ʿIzz al-Dîn 144, 153, 263
Ibn al-Balḫî 7
Ibn Coteiba (see Ibn Qutaiba)
Ibn Daud, Abraham 382
Ibn Faḍlân, Aḥmad 21, 23, 141, 143,

161, 172–73, 182, 186, 192, 208, 212, 256, 257, 422
Ibn al-Faqîh al-Hamâdhânî 141, 142, 159, 198, 199, 200, 205
Ibn Ḥawqal, Abu'l-Qâsim 14, 145, 200
Ibn Isḥâq 195
Ibn Khordâdhbeh (Ibn Khurradâdhbeh), Abu'l-Qâsim ʿUbaidallâh ibn ʿAbdallâh 141, 142, 198, 199, 202, 205, 249, 252, 257
Ibn Miskawaih, Aḥmad b. Muḥammd 144, 272
Ibn Musayyab, Saʿîd 196
Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, ʿAbdallâh 196
Ibn al-Nadîm, Isḥâq b. Ibrâhîm 384
Ibn Qutaiba, ʿAbdallâh b. Muslim 197, 205
Ibn Rusta (Ibn Rosteh), Abu ʿAlî Aḥmad b. ʿUmar 142, 200, 203, 205, 233, 249, 250, 422
Ibrâhîm b. Yaʿqûb 204, 381, n. 10
Igor' 252, 256, 257
Ikhshîdids 178
Ilarion, Metropolitan of Kievan Rus' 265
Ioann, Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga 355, 361
Iran, see Persia, Persians
Iranian languages and peoples 388, 391
Iraq 234
Isinglass, see Trade Products
Islam, Islamic World 173, 209, 210, 211, 213, 229, 232, 234, 236, 281, 284, 373–86
Trade with 238–239, 240, 243–244
Israel, Land of 282, 285
Israyēl, bishop and missionary to North Caucasian Huns 124, 171, 408, 410, 417, 429
al-Iṣṭakhrî, Abu Isḥâq al-Fârisî 196, 200, 203, 205, 207, 213, 214, 215, 216, 426
Italian 397
Italy 178, 179
Itil, see Atıl
Ivanov K. 358
Ivashov L. 368

Jabğu (Jabghu), see *Yabğu*
Jacob 260
Japheth 158, 195, 196, 197, 198
Jaroslav I, Grand Prince of Kiev (1024–1054) 28, 262
Jarrâḥ (Djarrâḥ) b. ʿAbd Allah al-Ḥakamî, 167, 375
Jazykov D.I. 19–20
Jebu Xak'an, see *Yabğu Qağan*
Jewelry 224, 225
Jews, Judaism 8, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 55, 138, 139, 150, 146, 154, 281–282, 284, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 369, 370, 371, 374, 380–82, 385, 400, see also Ashkenazic
Berber 153
Byzantine 161
Daghestanian 152
East European 9
Eastern Slavic 388–89
Ḥimyârî 153
Khazarian 9, 139, 147
Idumaean 153
Ituraean 153
Non-Rabbinical 144
Qaraite 144, 149, see also Karaite language, people
Rabbanite 40, 56, 144, 149, 151, 155
Seljuk 159
Jibghu (see also *Yabğu*) and siege of Tbilisi 331–345
Jila 275
Johannesburg 364
John, Bishop of Gothia 169–70, 174
John Skylitzes 166–67
John Tzimiskes, Byzantine Emperor (969–976) 166
Jordanes 52
Joseph, Khazar king 145, 147, 109, 119, 121, 122, 208, 210, 212, 214–18, 220, 233, 240, 257, 276
Juanšer, Prince of Cacuasian Albania 407–10, 413, 417, 428–30
Judah ha-Levi, see Halevi, Judah
Judea 359
(Judeo-)Arabic 392–94
Judeo-Chinese 392
(Judeo-)Greek 391–92
(Judeo-)Spanish 392, 394
Judeo-Tats 152
Jurčen 134
Jurjân 229
Justinian II, Byzantine emperor (685–95, 705–11) 168, 173, 430–2
Juvainî, ʿAṭâ Malik 129

Kaganovich, Lazar M. 365, 366
Kaghan, see *Qağan*

Kałankatukʿ 406, 409
Kalinina Tatjana M. 248, 249, 250
Kalmyk Steppe 164
Kam, see *Qam*
Kama River 42, 401, 419, 422
Kandyba, Viktor 356
Karaites, see Qaraites
Karkha 275
Kârnâmag 272
Kartlis Cxovreba ("The Georgian Chronicle") 320, 321, 411
K[a]s[i]r 54, 401
Kavad II Shiroe, Sasanid ruler (628) 416–17
Kavars, see Qabars
Kazembeg, Mîrzâ-Muḥammad A. 21
Kende, *künde* 13, 275
Kerch (K-r-ts, Bospor) 122, 220, 221, 233
  Straits of 165
Khabars, see Qabars
Khagan, see *Qağan*
Khaliz 276
Khatun 425
Khavar, see Qabar
Khazarân 210, 229
Khazars, Khazaria 8, 20, 23, 25, 26, 27, 42, 43, 44, 48, 50, 51,59, 60, 87–8, 110, 119, 121, 153, 163–65,167, 178, 179, 181–83, 399, 409 (Xazirk') 412, 417–19, 425–26
  Agriculture, agricultural products 207, 208, 209, 211, 214–18, 243
  Alliance with Byzantium 432
  Alliance with Hungarians 184, 186
  Apiculture 215, 228
  Army, mercenaries 210, 211, 212, 216, 218
  Boats, water transport 230, 241
  Capital (see also Atıl) 170
  Carting 214
  Christians, Christianity in 170–71, 210, 211
  Cities 217
  Coinage (the "Moses Dirhams") 156, 159
  Court 170
  Craft production 207, 208, 209
  Date of reconfiguration of steppes 186–87
  Defeat of Bulğars 428
  Direct rule over Pečenegs 189–90
  Division of Hungarians *ca.* 830 190
Empire, see Khazars, Qağanate
Ethnonym 15, 16, 17, 37, 53, 54, 270
Fish, fishing 215, 216, 217, 218
Foraging 209
Fortresses 174–75, 187
Ġulâms 9
Hebrew Correspondence 30, 40, 132, 144, 145, 157, 145, 146, 150, 151, 154, 157, 158, 175, 182, 308, 308 n. 5, 327, 327 n. 90, 380, 382, 384, 399, 400
Historiography of 17–19 (Hungarian) 19–27 (Russian) 152–53 (Russian Eurasianist)
Immigration to the west 394
Institutions 173
Internal commerce 240–41
Invade Caucasian Albania 429
Irrigation 211, 218
Islam, conversion to 137, 142, 210, 211, 213
Jewry, Judaism and conversion to 9, 29, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 56, 123, 125, 137, 141–49, 151–61, 170, 183, 210, 211
Kievan Letter 144, 157, see also Khazars, Hebrew Correspondence
King 7, 141, 217, 230, 279, 281, 286–90
Kingship, dual 18, 39, 133, 155, 156
Kingship, sacral 133–4, 156, 157
Kündü Qağan 173
Language 1, 13, 14, 29, 31, 41, 54, 57, 271, 387
Literacy in Hebrew 148, 154
Management policies 192
Muslims 137, 138, 142, 148, 183
Nomadism 49, 216, 217
Origins 52–54
Paganism 131, 132, 135–36, 142, 147, 150, 157
pastoralism 207, 209, 219
Pech (see also *Qağan Beg*) 169
Qağan, Qağanate 1, 7, 36, 37, 47, 53, 59, 124, 133, 134, 137, 142, 147, 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 168, 169, 172, 233, 237, 239, 360, 361, 362, 363, 366, 367, 368, 375, 376, 383, 399, 402, 417
Qağan Beg (*Išâd, Yillig*), see also Khazar King 33, 36, 37, 133, 142, 144, 147, 154, 155, 160, 173, 210, 213, 400
Rebels (?) 184, 187–88

Relations with Byzantium 168–70, 173–6, 181, 83
Religions of 51
Relocation of Hungarians *ca.* 830 184
Renaming of Hungarians 187, 191
Renaming of Pechenegs 189
Reorganisation of Pechenegs *ca.* 830 188–189
Rise 163–64
Slavic-speaking 390, 394
Social re-engineering 192
Sphere of influence 185
Taxes 212, 213, 214, 222
Territory 174–75, 182, 184
Tithe 212, 213, 214, 231
Trade 207, 209, 211, 213, see also Trade Products
Tribute 212, 213, 214, 218, 222, 238
Victory over Pechenegs *ca.* 830 184
Water transport 214
Kherson (Cherson, Xerson) 168, 170, 219, 220, 221, 226, 227, 431
Khorenac'i (Khorenats'i, Xorenac'i), Movsês 311–314 (dating of) 401, 418, 430
Khorenac'i (Xorenac'i), Pseudo-Movsês, see also *Ašxarhac'oyc', The Armenian Geography*, Širakec'i, Ananias
Khotzirs 172
Khurâsân 41
Khusraw, Khusro, see Ḫusraw
Khuvrat, see Kubrat
Khwârazm 7, 40, 57, 138, 210, 232, 239
al-Khwârazmî (al-Khwârizmî, al-Ḫuwârizmî), Abu Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Mûsâ 198, 205, 376, n. 2
Kiev 25, 40, 148, 176
Khazar Jewish community in 40, 41, 144
Kiev-Polessian lands, language 388–91, 393–94
Kievan letter 144, 157, see also Khazar, Hebrew Correspondence
Kingdom of Heaven 284
Kingship
dual 33, 39, 383
sacral 33, 39, 133–34, 275
Kizilov, Michael 110, 113
Klimata 168, 182
Ključevskij (Kliuchevsky, Kljuchevskij) Vasilij O. 24, 248
Klykov, Viacheslav M. 368
Kmoskó, Mihály 18
Koestler, Arthur 55, 365
Kohen, kohanim 40, 96, 157
Kokovcov (Kokovtsov) Pavel K. 22, 121, 122, 257
Konovalova, P.K. 257
Korchagin, Viktor 364, 365
Kovalev, Roman K. 43, 49
Kovalevskij (Kovalivs'kyj) Andrej P. 256
Kožinov (Kozhinov), Vadim 28, 355, 359, 360, 361
Krasnodar 364
Kristó, Gyula 18
Kryms'kyj (Krymskij), Ahatanhel (Agafangel) Ju. (E.) 31
K'uar 131
Kuban River 52, 221, 239, 364, 365
Kuban Steppe 164
Kubrat (Khubraat', Khuvrat) 273, 418, 427
Kulakovskij, Julian 412
Kumans, see Cumans
Künde, see *Kende*
Kündü Qağan 173, see also Khazars
Kunik, Arist 109, 112
Kur Plain 164
Kut 220
Kûyâ 40
Kuz'min, Apollon 355
Kuznecov, V. 60
Kyzlasov, Igor' L. 52

Lakhmids 378
Lambat (Lmbt) 220
Landa, Robert G. 28
al-Lârsiyya, see Ors
Latin 385
Latinoid language 391
Lazica 414–16
Legends 382
Leo III, Byzantine Emperor (717–741) 152, 168, 399, 432
Leo IV "the Khazar," Byzantine Emperor (775–780) 399
Leo VI, Byzantine Emperor (886–912) 166, 175, 179, 180, 181, 183, 184, 185, 400
Leo the Deacon 166
Levedi, clan 274
Levedia 250, 251, 273
Levites 157
Lewicki, Tadeusz 23, 142, 250
Ligeti, Lajos (Louis) 14, 269
Lithuanian 394
Ljubavskij, Matvej K. 25, 27

Louis II, Carolingian Emperor (855–875) 255
Ludwig, Dieter 41, 42, 151, 270, 401, 403, 412

Macedonian dynasty, Byzantine ruling house (867–1056) 166
Maeotis, Lake 419
Magomedov, Murad G. 45, 421
"*Majûsî*" 293, 294
al-Ma'mûn, ʿAbbâsid Caliph (813–833) 125
Manichaeism 123, 125, 128, 129, 130
al-Manṣûr, ʿAbbâsid Caliph (754–775) 376
Mangup 109, 111, 220
al-Maqdasî, see al-Muqaddasî
Marquart (Markwart), Joseph 19, 412
Maršak, Boris I. 425
Marwân b. Muḥammad, Umayyad general and caliph (744–750) 137, 216, 375
al-Marwazî (Marvazî), Šaraf al-Zamân Ṭâhir 217
Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik 167, 375
Mason, R.A.E. 51
al-Masʿûdî, Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAli 144, 145, 152, 153, 154, 156, 208, 230, 377
Matarcha, see Tmutarakan'
Mauricius, Byzantine Emperor (582–602) 421
Mediterranean Sea 381, 382
Menachem Ben Saruq 122 n. 44
Mercenaries, Muslim 239, see also Ors
Merchants 217, 229–39, 241
Mermaid 383
Meščerskij, Nikita A. 21
Metallurgy 224
Methodius, missionary to the Slavs 124
Michael the Syrian 421, 423
Millet 222
Minorsky (Minorskij) Vladimir F. 22
Miquel, André 386
Mixeev, Vladimir K. 46
Mokcevai Kartlisai 320, 321
Mongols, Tatar-Mongols 28, 35, 134, 388, 394
  Mongolian language 388
Moravcsik, Gyula (Julius) 11, 124
Moravia 170, 185, 387
Moscow 364
Mountains, holy 130
Movsēs Daskhurants'i, see Dasxuranc'i (Daskhurants'i), Movsēs
Movsēs Xorenac'i, see Khorenac'i, Movsês,
Mstislav 262
Mubârakšâh, Faḫr ad-Dîn 148
Muğan, Eastern Türk Qağan (553–572) 125
Mughal (1526–1858) Timurid dynasty in Indian Subcontinent 128
Muḥammad 364
Müneccimbaşı, Aḥmed b. Luṭfullâh 22
Munk, Shlomo 109
al-Muqaddasî, Abu ʿAbdallâh Muḥammad 147, 214, 216, 230, 232, 233
Murzakevich, Nikolai 121

al-Nadîm, Muḥammad b. Isḥâq b. 148
Nagrodzka-Majchrzyk, Teresa 36
Nasonov, Arsenij N. 252
Napol'skix (Napol'skikh) V.V. 260
Nazarenko Aleksandr V. 246, 252, 255
Németh, Gyula (Julius) 12, 13, 15, 269
Neubauer, Adolf 110
Near East 229, 232, 236, 237, 239
Neo-Eurasianists 355, 371
Neo-pagans 355, 361, 362, 363, 369, 371
Nerses, Georgian Prince 135
New York 365
Nicephorus, see Nikephoros
Nicholas Mystikos, Patriarch of Constantinople (901–907, 912–925) 171
Nicolet, Claude 386
Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople (806–13, 815, d. 828) and historian 165–68, 273, 411–12, 414, 425
Nikephoros Phokas, Byzantine Emperor (963–969) 166
Nomadism, nomads 374, 375, 384
Noonan, Thomas S. 42–45, 124, 245, 247, 254, 258
North America 370
North Caucasus, see Caucasus
Novgorod 358
Novosel'cev (Novosel'tsev) Anatolij P. 26, 27, 31, 32, 46–48, 153–54, 245–48, 254, 263, 422

Obadiyah, Khazar ruler 33, 36, 147, 151, 155, 156, 158, 160
Oğur, Oğurs 14, 15, 45, 270, 271
Oğuric Turkic, see Turkic Languages
Oğuz (Ghuzz) Turks 15, 23, 33, 34, 47,

142, 148, 150, 176, 181, 182, 183, 232, 240, 275, 304
Oil (non-petroleum) 227, 242
Oka River 212, 239, 419
Old Church Slavic 391
Oleg, Rus' Prince (897–913) 249, 251, 252, 254–260, 262
Onoğurs 14, 172, 271
Onoğundurs (Ounnogours) 421, 424
Ors, al-Orsiyya, al-Ursiyya 32, 138, 157, 239
Ottoman Turks 134
Ottonians 178
Özbek Khan, Jočid ruler (1312–1341) 159

Pagans, paganism 131, 132, 135–36, 142, 144, 145, 147, 150, 157, see also Khazars, paganism
Pahlavi texts 291–97, 301
Palaeo-Caucasian languages and peoples 8
Partenit 220
Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople (780–784) 169
Pečenegs (Pechenegs) 34, 35, 36, 43, 46, 159, 161, 177, 184, 188–90, 208, 218, 219, 230, 232, 233, 239, 240, 275, 276, 370
  Agriculture 219
  Alliance with Balkan Bulğars 175, 180
  Crafts 219
  Defeat by Khazars *ca.* 830 184
  Divisional reorganisation 188–89
  In Khazar sphere of influence 182
  Kangars (three leading divisions) 185, 189
  Khazarian 215
  Renamed 189
  Rulers (*archontes*) 172
  Succession (cross-cousin) 189
  Supreme authority 189–190
  Victory over Hungarians *ca.* 830 184
  Victory over Hungarians in 890s 175, 180, 181
Peloponnese 178
Pereščepina 425
Persia, Persians 16, 184, 375, 378, 401, 406, 409, 410, 414–17
Petronas 174
Petruxin (Petrukhin) V. Ja. 28, 151, 247, 249, 252, 257, 259–61
Phanagouria (Phanagoria, Tmutarakan) 168, 173
Pharisees 355, 359
Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople (858–867, 877–886) 171
Plano Carpini, John 45
Pletnëva, Svetlana A. 26, 27, 33, 36, 39, 48–51, 150, 151, 155, 238, 241, 242, 248
Poland, Polish 387–88, 393–94
Poliak, Abraham N. 29
Polliak, Meira 110
Pontic steppes 164, 178, 180, 181, 186, 187, 431
Porat, Dina 357
Priskos (Priscus) Rhetor 14, 15, 52, 270, 401
Pritsak, Omeljan 10, 33, 37, 38, 40, 51, 55, 139, 155, 157, 160, 240, 258, 260, 269, 403
Prophetic dream 280, 288–90

Qabars (Kabar, Khabar, Khavar) 13, 18, 33, 37, 150, 151, 155, 156, 185, 187–88, 190, 191, 274, 275
Qağan (Kaghan, Khaghan, Khakan, Xak'an title) 274, 412, 425, 429 ("King of Turkestan") Western Türk 7
Qam (Turkic "shaman") 96, 132, 157
Qaračay-Balqars 37
Qaraites, Qaraim, Karaites (Eastern European) 29, 56, 109, 110
  Turkic language of 29, 396
Qaraism, sect of Judaism 40, 56, 143–44, 160 n. 175
Qarluqs 130
Qasar 270, see also Khazar, ethnonym
Qazaqs 9, 17
Qıpčaq Turks, language and people, see also Cumans 17, 29, 47, 134, 304, 324 & n. 82, 335
Qırğız 130
al-Qirqisânî, Ya'qûb (Ya'akov) 143
Qitan 134
Qorığ 134
Qut 133

Râd̲âniyya (Râdhâniyya) 38, 44, 141, 160, 229
Rappaport, Shlomo 109
Ravenna Anonymous 52
'read' 97
Recognitio 97–99
Reed, Douglas 355, 363, 364, 365
Relexification 388–96
Revelation, Divine Essence 282

Rha, see also Volga River 419
Rhaeto-Romance 397
Rjurik 251, 252, 257
Rodionov I. 368
Romance languages 390, 392
  In Balkans 388, 397
Romanos II Lekapenos (Romanus Lecapenus, 959–963), Byzantine Emperor 144, 161, 166, 177, 258, 400
Romašov, Sergej A. 47–48
Róna-Tas, András 14, 16, 19
Rosenberg, Alfred 357
Roux, Jean-Paul 404
Rubruck, William 216
Rumania 387
Runic, runiform script 52
Rus' 1, 8, 10, 19, 25–8, 35, 40, 42, 44, 47, 48, 55, 141, 148, 161, 169, 172, 174–75, 176, 179, 181, 182, 187, 191, 211, 213, 229, 240, 303, 304 and nn. 63, 64, 65, 305 and n. 69, 354 (Kievan), 359, 361, 362, 363, 365, 368, 369, 370
  merchants 238, 239
  Qağanate 38
Russia 209, 231 232, 234, 235, 236, 239, 354, 355, 356, 358, 359, 360, 363, 364, 367, 368, 370
Russian 391
Russian Primary Chronicle 176
Rybakov, Boris A. 26, 28
Rye 222

Sa'adiah Gaon 143
Sabır (Sabir, Savir, Suwâr) 13, 14, 41, 45, 53, 54, 402, 421, 425
Sable/marten 230, 231, 237 see also furs
Šad 412, 413
Saka-Khotanese 291
Sallam al-Tarjuman, 'The Interpreter', 376, 383
Saltovo-Majackaja Culture 35, 44, 45, 48, 50, 51, 135, 221–7, 238, 239, 241, 242, 243
Samandar 38, 136 and n. 71, 306 n. 80, 317
  Christinianity in 136
  Judaism in 136
  Islam in 136
Sâmânids 235, 236, 239
Samara River 419, 422–24, 427–28
Samosdelka 51
Sangari, Itshak/Isaac 120, 160
Ṣaqlâb, Ṣaqâlîba 211, 232, 303, 304
Šara Oğur 14
Sarïgšïn 104–5
Sarkel/Šarkel 39, 44, 47, 85–87, 150, 155, 159, 174, 185, 241, 242
Sarmatia 419, 421, 426 (First Sarmatia)
Sarozius (Sarôsios) 61
Sart 129
Savartoi Asphaloi, see also Hungarians 190
Schechter Document, see *Cambridge Document* and Khazar Hebrew Correspondence
Scythia, Land of the Scythians 65, 419, 421–22
Sedov, Valentin V. 246, 247
Sefer Hakuzari 279, 286, 289–90
Senga, Toru 16
Serbia 387, 397
Shakhmatov (Šaxmatov) Aleksej A. 246, 248
Shamans 40, 132, 157, see also *Qam*
Shapira, Dan 110, 112–14, 120–22
Sheep 208, 214, 216, 218, 383
Silk Road 49, 129
Šilovka 424–25
Sinor, Denis 11
Širakec'i (Shirakets'i), Ananias ("Pseudo-Movsês Xorenac'i") 273, 418, 421, 424, 427, 429–30
Slav, Slavs 8, 25, 55, 56, 123, 125, 212, 354, 355, 369, 370, 427
  Slavic languages 388–97
  Slavic-speaking Khazars 390, 394
Slaves 207, 210, 211, 215, 218, 231, 232, 233
Slovakia 387
Slovene 395
Smithing, see metallurgy
Soġdians 128, 129, 160, 291
Solkhat 111
Solomon, King 362
Solov'ëv, Sergej M. 24
Sorbian, Sorbs 388–396
Spain, see al-Andalus
Squirrels 230, see also furs
Starkova, Klavdia 112
Stern, Bezalel 120
Strack, Hermann 109, 110, 112
Sudak, see Sugdaia
Ṣûfî 126, 127
Sugdaia (Sugdaya, Sougdaia Sugdeia, Sudak) 122, 220, 226, 431–32
Sukhobokov (Suxobokov) O.V. 253
Sulak River 45
Svjatoslav (Sviatoslav), Prince of Kievan

Rus (969–972) 254, 261, 263, 265, 359, 365, 367, 368, 370
Svyatopluk, last ruler of Moravia (d. 894) 185
Swartä 100–01
Sweden 235, 236
Swine, pigs 223, 228
Symeon, ruler of Balkan Bulğars (893–927) 179, 180

Aṭ-Ṭabarî, Abu Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarîr 21, 142, 153
Taman Peninsula 111, 152, 243
Tamatarkha (Tmutarakan, Tmutorokanʾ, see also Phanagouria) 111, 171, 240, 241, 243
Tanais River, see Don River 419
Tang shu 271
Taoism 126
Tarki 38
Taspar/Tatpar, Eastern Türk Qağan (572–581) 125
Tatishchev (Tatiščev) Vasilij N. 264
Tbilisi 407, 415–6
Tengri (*Tʿangri Xan*) 131, 132, 133, 136
Terkh Inscription, see Turkic Inscriptions
Tez Inscription, see Turkic Inscriptions
"The Scholar" (in *Sefer Hakuzari*) 279, 282, 285, 286, 289–90
Thema 189
Theodosia 111
Theophanes 163, 165, 166, 167, 168, 403, 411–12, 415–17, 425
Theophanes, Byzantinus 273
Theophilus, Byzantine Emperor (829–842) 169, 247
Theophylactus Simocatta 421
Tiele/T'ieh-lê 14, 15, 16
Tmutarakan, Tmutorokanʾ, see also Phanagouria, Tamatarkha
Togan, Ahmed Zeki Velidi 23
Togarmah 158, 402
Toledo, Khazars in 149, 382
Toločko, Petro P. 25
Tomsk 367
Tong Yabğu Qağan 412–13, 417
Tonyuquq 126
Topos 379
Toquz Oğuz 15, 16
Torks, see Oğuz
Totemism 132
Trade 207, 209, 211, 213, 229ff., 238–39
  Central Asian route 240
  Near Eastern Route 240
Trade products
  beaver 207, 215
  hides 219
  honey 207, 215, 228, 241, 243
  isinglass 207
  wax 207, 214, 219, 228, 242
Transcaucasia 38, 42, 47, 163, 164, 167, 178, 413–15, 428, 430–32
Transylvania 48
Tree cults 129, 131
Trubachev (Trubačev), Oleg N. 260
Tudun 431
Turkestan 429–30
Turkic inscriptions
  Shine Usu 270
  Terkh (Terh) 16, 270
  Tes, Tez 16, 270
Turkic languages and peoples 12, 60, 63, 387–88, 396
  Oğuric/Bulğaric-Čuvaš branch, 13, 14, 15, 39, 40, 47, 50, 52, 53, 54, 75, 77–78, 83–84, 91, 271, 272, see also Qıpčaq
Turkish 391
Türks (Turks), Türk Qağanate/Empire 8, 9, 13, 39, 46, 53, 125, 163, 167, 403, 404, 411–12, 414–17, 425–26, 430
  Burial customs 135
  Eastern 125, 156, 158
  Western 7, 37, 41, 47, 53, 54, 403, 429
Tyzwl 146

Ugrian, Ugric 32, 46, 53
Ukraine, Ukrainian 390–95
ʻUlamâʾ 384
Ulfilas 124
Umayyads, see Caliphate
Ural 164, 186
Ushkuinik V. 365, 366
USSR 354, 365, 371
ʻUthmân, Caliph (644–651) 378
Uyğurs 8, 14, 16, 17, 53
  Qağan 125
  Conversion to Manichaeism 128, 129, 160

Vámbéry, Herman (Ármin) 269
Varaz-Grigor 409
Varaz Trdat 124
Vardan 168
Vasilevski (Wasilewski), Tadeusz 265
Vasyutinski (Vasjutinskaja), Daria 110, 121
Vegetables 228

Vernadsky (Vernadskij) George M. 25
Verxnečirjurtovskoe gorodišče 45
Vikings 43
Viroy, Bishop of Caucasian Albania 404–05, 413
Vita Constantini, see Constantine/Cyril
Viticulture 222, 223
Vixnovič (Vikhnovich), Vsevolod L. 110
Vladimir I Prince of Kievan Rus' (980–1015) 148, 256, 263–65, 362, 368, 369
Vnasēp Surhap 313, 322
Volga River 7, 25, 28, 35, 42, 43, 47, 48, 49, 51, 148, 164, 176, 182, 186, 208, 210, 211, 214, 215, 216, 218, 228, 230, 234, 239, 240, 241, 419, 421–23, 425–28
Voronež 428

Wahrâm î Čôbên 296, 323
Walid I, caliph 379
al-Wathiq, caliph 376
'Water' 91–92
Wax, see Trade Products
Weapons, weapon-making 219, 224
Weinryb, Bernard 11, 55
Werner, J. 273
Western Eurasia 210, 211, 214, 218, 229, 230, 231, 233
Wexler, Paul 56
Wheat 222
'White' and 'yellow' 79, 86–87, 90, 104
Wine 227, 242
Wool, wool cloth 224

x < *q* 93–4
Xamlïx 88, 104
Xiongnu (Hsiung-nu) 15, 134
Xorenac'i, Movsês, see Khorenac'i, Movsês
Xvol'son (Chwolson), Daniel 21, 109, 110, 112, 116, 121, 122

Yabğu 413
Yabğu Qağan 412–13
al-Ya'qûbî, Abu Ibn Abî Ya'qûb b. Wahb b. Waḍiḥ 142, 196, 205
Yâqût b. 'Abdallâh al-Rûmî al-Ḥamawî, 141, 145, 197, 205
Yarmolinsky, Avram 11
Yazdgard III, Sasanid ruler (632–51) 408
Yehudah ben Barzillay 150
Yemen 301 n. 47
Yiddish
  as a clue to the fate of the Judaized Khazars 387–97
  as a Slavic language 388
  comparison with German grammar 393, 395
  dual number in 395
  gender in 394
  periphrastic verbal construction in 388
  plural number in 394–95
  unique Romance elements in 392
yillig (*yilig, yelig*) 37, see also Khazars, *Qağan Beg*
yil-tawar (Volga Bulğar title) 172
yog see *doğ*

Zacharias (Zakharias) Rhetor 272, 401, 426
Zajączkowski, Ananiasz 10, 29
Zaxoder (Zakhoder), Boris N. 23, 216, 250
Zeiteishvili, S.G. 60
Ziebêl 331–33, 412–13
Zionism 355, 359, 360, 363, 364, 366, 367
Zuckerman, Constantine 147, 154, 157 246, 252